
Entangled Paths Towards Modernity

Contextualizing
Socialism and Nationalism
in the Balkans

Augusta Dimou

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AUGUSTA DIMOU



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E-mail: mgreenwald@sorosny.org

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*The first socialist text I ever read
was a text
on Humanism
on the imperative of social justice
and social equality.
The first socialist text I ever read
I read it*

In the Eyes of my Grandfather

To Him

*for he was a worker
and
not
an intellectual*

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	XIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XV
I. INTRODUCTION	1
1. Methodology	6
2. Context, Ideology, Adaptation	10
II. INTELLECTUALS	17
1. The Russian Connection and the Geography of Revolution	19
2. Models and Master Texts	25
3. The Balkan Disciples	38
4. Intellectuals and Political Systems	48
5. Social Descent and Professional Integration	51
III. THE AMBIGUITIES OF MODERNITY	59
1. Some Notes on the Historiography	61
2. The Ideological Roots of Serbian Socialism	65
3. Modernization and Its Antecedents	70
4. A Moral World Imperiled	76
5. The Mission: Saving Serbdom	79
6. The Individual and Society	82
7. The Radicals and the Nation	85
8. A l'attaque	89
9. The Railway	93
10. The Agrarian Radicals	96
11. A Popular Party	99

12. The Watershed	104
13. A Church and an Army	108
14. Slavophilism	112
15. To the People	119
16. Manipulating the Past	126
17. Heading for Confrontation	129
18. Constitutional Philosophy	134
19. In Power	137
20. Legacies of Radicalism	142
IV. CAUGHT UP IN THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MODERNITY	
1. The Historiography of the Schism	164
2. Bulgarian Socialism	175
3. <i>Sŭiuz</i> vs. <i>Partiia</i> : The Priority of Political or Economic Organization?	179
4. Blagoev vs. the Narodniks	185
5. Constructing the Social subject: A Party with Two Voices ..	191
6. Modernization	197
7. Mentalities	201
8. The Profile of the Party	204
9. Flirting with the Peasant	208
10. <i>Obshto Delo</i>	224
11. "Alarm for Ghosts—Our Apostasy or Their Nonsense"	240
12. Historical Materialism Not Economic Determinism	251
13. The Debate on Private Ownership	257
14. The Debate on Party Membership	261
15. The Predicament of Bulgaria	267
16. Theory and Practice	269
17. How to Make Sense of Broad Socialism	273
18. Rethinking Bulgarian Politics	279

V. MODERNITY WITHOUT SOCIALISM	301
1. Historiographical Notes	309
2. Greek Nationalism: The Imaginary of Superiority	315
3. Some Particularities of Greek Socio-Economic Development	322
4. Intellectuals: The Discrete Temptation of Submission	328
5. The Liberals: Progress, Expansion and Order	352
6. The National Schism: Metamorphoses of Political Polarization	360
7. “The Promise of the Impossible Revolution”	367
VI. EPILOGUE	407
1. Divergent Paths Towards Modernity?	407
2. Legitimacy and Mass Politics	414
3. Socialism	417
4. Politics and the State	420
5. Legacies	421
BIBLIOGRAPHY	427
INDEX	449

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List of Abbreviations

BANU—Bulgarian Agrarian National Union
BWSDP—Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party
CPSU—Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EAM—National Liberation Front (Greece)
GSEE—General Confederation of Greek Workers
HŠS—Croatian Peasant Party
KKE—Communist Party of Greece
PNŢ—National Peasant Party (Romania)
POF—Parti Ouvrier Français
SEKE—Socialist Workers' Party of Greece
SPD—Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SSDP—Serbian Social Democratic Party

I. INTRODUCTION

Rien ne se fait de grand ni même d'utile dans la
humanité sans une prodigalité d'ardeur, de foi,
d'enthousiasme, d'amour, que les temps postérieurs,
qui en bénéficient, jugent ridicules.

Gabriel Tarde

More than any other ideology of the nineteenth century, socialism came into being as a trenchant political answer to the challenges of modern mass industrial society. Born of the underbelly of capitalism, socialism proposed a comprehensive futuristic vision of a fairer social order and offered a vastly powerful ideology to those who sought to change the world and who repudiated distress as the predestined condition of humanity. From its origins in Western Europe, socialism spread to other parts of the world, informing the political imaginary of societies that sought to cross the threshold of modernity. How was the international socialist project “translated” (both literally and metaphorically) in the context of Southeastern Europe? And what could socialism, arising out of the realities and concerns of the modern industrial capitalist society, signify for the predominantly agrarian societies of the Balkans? More than simply a paradox observation, this was the starting point of reflection for this research on modern ideologies and the broader problem of political modernity in the Balkans.

The book focuses on the introduction of socialism as a correlative of political modernity in three Southeast European countries (Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece). It has a three-fold analytical strategy: firstly, to examine the correlation between context and ideology; secondly, to discuss the process of transfer and adaptation of socialist paradigms; and thirdly, to explore the potential dynamic that socialism generated as a political option in these societies—and the reasons that account for the presence, or the absence, of such a dynamic. The analysis focuses principally on socialist discourses and their main carriers, socialist intellectuals. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, it was the synergy of two dynamic and parallel-running processes that provided for the

particular political chemistry in Southeastern Europe: state and nation building, on the one hand, and the introduction of modern ideologies in a quest to formulate new political identities and bring the masses into politics, on the other. To the extent possible, this work seeks to locate the introduction of socialism in correlation to other ideologies of mass representation such as liberalism, nationalism and agrarianism.

The first introductory section discusses broadly the seminal role of intellectuals in the dissemination of ideological currents in the Balkans, by mapping out the itineraries of early, late nineteenth-century socialism. It emphasizes the catalytic influence of Russian populism in the 1870s and 1880s in the central-northern Balkans (Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria) as a whole, arguing that this influence is not solely reflected in the theoretical options but also, most essentially, in the *model of intelligentsia* adopted by socialist intellectuals. The change in the socialist paradigm that occurred slowly at the end of the nineteenth century, when populism was gradually superseded by Marxism, also signaled a transformation in the aspirations of socialism, from a movement promoted by a conscious and willing intelligentsia targeting the welfare of the people, to the creation of social-democratic parties with a mandate to be the explicit agents of specific class interests.

The three case studies that constitute the core of the book deal with the reception of three socialist paradigms in three different South-east European countries. These case studies were chosen more by virtue of their capacity to stand as exemplary cases illuminating the problem of *transfer and adaptation* than with the intention of providing a chronologically linear and all-encompassing historical narrative on Balkan socialism. For this reason, the reader seeking a strictly factual account of the development of socialism in the Balkans will probably be disappointed. Paradigmatic history, a problem-oriented approach rather than syntactic history, drives the book's analytical and narrative structure.¹ The first case study on Serbia focuses on the local adaptation of Russian populism (*Narodničestvo*) between 1870 and 1890. The second deals with Bulgaria and the local adaptation of Marxism from 1890 to 1903, while the third discusses the general fortunes of socialism in Greece from the 1870s to the 1930s, with a special emphasis on the adaptation of the bolshevik paradigm in the 1920s and 1930s.

It appeared more than reasonable to start with the Serbian Radicals in the 1870s, since they were the firstborn of the Balkan socialist movement. Their political breakthrough, and the establishment of a

successful political party characterized by a remarkable longevity, raised the question of the nature of their ideology and its recipients. The Serbian case thus concentrates on the transformation process of the Radicals, from an intellectual to a popular movement and eventually into a mass political party. As a political entity they achieved indisputable hegemony in the Serbian political scene in the 1880/1890s, decades which also demarcate a new era in the long process of their ideological mutation. The radical movement was a successful adaptation of the *narodnik* paradigm, and its introduction to Serbia in the 1870s corresponded, more or less, to the heyday of its Russian ideological matrix. The Serbian case discusses the adaptation of populism as a *particular variant of agrarian socialism*, suitably tailored to meet the requirements of “developing” countries lacking an elaborate class structure. Besides the issue of adaptation, the fate of radicalism in Serbia raises some interesting questions about the nature of populism in general. Serbian radicalism, as the original Russian archetype, was supported by an intelligentsia painfully aware of its country’s socio-economic backwardness. The Radicals’ “moral revolt” rejected the evolution of Serbia according to the premises of Western capitalism, which they equated with the country’s westernization. Consequently, the Radicals strove to control the modernization process and devise a developmental model attuned to the country’s specific social and political traditions and distinct from the path of western capitalism, which they perceived as a threat to Serbia’s egalitarian social structure. As the title of the section on Serbia, *The Ambiguities of Modernity*, indicates, the Radicals’ ideological itinerary was determined as much by pragmatic consideration of the available options and their quest for political hegemony as by the structural ambiguities inherent in their ideology.

It appeared equally reasonable to consider the introduction of Marxism in the Bulgarian case. The Bulgarian Social Democratic Party was the first of its kind to be founded in the Balkans—in 1891. The Bulgarian section deals with the fortunes of socialism in this country from the 1880s, approximately, to 1903. It focuses essentially on the debate that erupted within the socialist party between 1900 and 1903, which eventually led to the splitting of the party into two fractions, the “Broads” and the “Narrows.” This debate, which to an extent foreshadowed the division between the reformist and revolutionary wings within the Second International, was in essence a debate about the appropriate understanding of Marxism and its adaptation to the specific

context of Bulgaria. The dissent of the Broads was triggered as much by local developments like the ascendance of the agrarian movement as by more generic theoretical deliberations that were taking place in the international socialist arena at approximately the same time. The Bulgarian case is emblematic of the *pitfalls inherent in the adaptation of a universalizing scheme of development according to the prescriptions of Marxism in a predominantly agrarian society*. The intention here is to view the schism and the diverging conceptions of socialist strategies as they were articulated through the Broad–Narrow debate as a result of the inability to sustain congruence between theoretical prescriptions, context and practice. As the title of the Bulgarian section, *Caught up in the Contradictions of Modernity*, indicates, the Bulgarian Social Democrats were caught up in the discrepancies of their own avant-garde role: as the messengers of a highly modern theory that, however, was barely reflected in the social structure of Bulgaria. In addition, it is proposed to view the Broad dissent more as an attempt at a local adaptation of Marxism, rather than as a mere reflex of the revisionist phenomenon. Although theoretically mediated by the revisionist debate, the Broad discord still carried a mental baggage indebted to the receding populist paradigm. Moreover, the Broad dissent can be viewed as *an attempt to mediate a solution between Populism and Marxism* in a society where socialism’s true protagonist, the working class, was still at an embryonic stage. The Broads’ procedural orientation towards a politics of reform was an attempt to find a solution to the impasse generated by the state of “underdevelopment,” the quest for social politics and the simultaneous need to stimulate economic growth.

In the case of Greece, the decision to discuss the particular era marking the adaptation of the bolshevik paradigm was determined by the fact of the belated establishment of a social-democratic party, in 1918, at a point in time when in the international socialist movement a change of paradigms was slowly taking place. The section on Greece covers the period from approximately 1870 to 1930. As indicated by the title, *Modernity Without Socialism*, this section addresses primarily the question as to why socialism did not become a political alternative in Greece until the second decade of the twentieth century. Additionally, it focuses on the fortunes of communism in Greece in the inter-war period, concentrating strictly on two aspects: on providing an alternative explanation for the bolshevization process within the Communist

Party and for the inability of the Communists to command electoral support in that same period. The first part, which advances an *in negativo* argument, discusses the fortunes of socialism as an intellectual movement before 1918 and emphasizes the fragmented character of the socialist discourses and the *consequent weakness of socialism as an alternative political option and as a constitutive player in Greek political modernity*. The argumentation proceeds through a contextual reconstruction of the reasons that contributed to the failure of socialism to make a political breakthrough before 1918, while the *underperformance of intellectuals* provides the major key in unlocking the riddle of this early period of the socialist movement. Subsequently, a similar argumentation is used to explain how the context imposed serious limitations on the capacity of the Communists to feel the political and social pulse of the electorate in the inter-war period. The main intention is to divert the object of inquiry from the, hitherto overemphasized, dogmatic content of the Communists' discourse and stress the catalytic influence of the "National Schism" as the formative political context of the inter-war period. For this reason, the inter-party controversies are purposely dissociated from the issue of the political impact of the Communists in the period. Rather, the emphasis is on the *timely* capacity of the liberal politician Eleftherios Venizelos and his party to occupy major strategic positions in the conceptual political field, thus retaining not only the prerogative of action, but also quasi-monopolizing the mass imaginary of modernity.

The three stories are delimited by "artificial" endings given to processes that logically continued far beyond the scope of the present work. Serbian radicalism did not "end" in the 1890s, Bulgarian social democracy did not cease to exist after 1903, nor was Greek communism a thing of the past by the mid-1930s. Apart from the practical limits on the size of the present narrative, *qualitative change* has been applied as a decisive criterion for a narrative "break." The Serbian Radicals of the late 1880s and early 1890s were no longer the Radicals of the opposition in the 1870s. In 1903, the Bulgarian Social Democrats split irrevocably into two fractions and were never to unite again. In the mid-1930s, the Greek Communists would be liberated from the shadow of Venizelism, the political factor that had decisively shaped their political existence up to that moment.

1. Methodology

The current work makes use of the analytical advantages offered both by transfer² and comparative studies.³ Far from agreeing on their methodological incompatibility or mutual exclusiveness, pointedly argued by some of the most articulate proponents of either fields,⁴ this study makes a strong case for their methodological complementarity. With no pretensions to constitute a new paradigm, transfer studies have raised a whole agenda of methodological issues that deserve attention when studying transnational processes of cultural and intellectual transmission. The current study embraces several of the sensitivities raised by transfer theorists,⁵ whose contribution most pertinent to this work on the transfer of socialist paradigms is the emphasis on the dynamic and creative character of the transmission and diffusion process. Cultural clusters or ideas are not mechanically “empted” from one context into another. Transfer is rather a process “in the making,” containing elements both of innovation and transformation. As a consequence, the transport of cultural and intellectual “goods” is an activity that resembles more a “translation” (both literal and metaphorical), involving multiple strategies (rhetorical, cultural, social, political engineering) of adaptation, in contrast to an assumed mechanical, static, or simply mimetic activity of transfer from one context to another. Commonly referred to as the history of reception, a variety of local components determines the form of adaptation and recontextualization of a paradigm. As will be demonstrated, reception is a creative and communicative action involving multiple levels of negotiation with a given context. Adaptation, the way an ideological system can be rendered intelligible for a society, is contingent on a variety of conditions and proceeds according to a menu of options but also of limitations.

The necessity to readdress the transfer of socialist paradigms to the European periphery was motivated by some additional considerations. The historiography of the history of socialism in the Balkans has remained, to a certain extent, entrenched and predictably polarized. Whereas communist historiography has discussed the adaptation

of socialist paradigms in terms of a universalizing scheme, as orthodoxy vs. deviation, post-communist historiography often tends to emphasize only the “imposed” character of socialism in the Balkans. Both historiographical trends tend to rely on static models of adaptation and tend to underestimate the local dynamics of the Balkan societies. Neither has the international history of socialism detached itself from this static model of transmission. Although emphasizing the transnational character of the transmission process, its perspective remains usually focused on the authoritative center. Ironically, whereas, on the one hand, incorporating the world’s peripheries into a narrative of world history was one of the emancipatory intentions of international socialism, it is precisely this view, on the other hand, that has failed to inscribe into the history of international socialism the standpoint of its own peripheries.

The current analysis is no less indebted to the challenges posed by comparative studies and the advantages of comparative practice. On the one hand, it makes use of the comparative method’s greatest quality: its capacity to explain by contrasting and juxtaposing case studies. On the other, it takes a “soft” comparative approach, combining elements both of the “individualizing” and the “generalizing” schools of comparison,⁶ without, however, adhering strictly to any of the two traditions. The three case studies under scrutiny are not linked to each other through temporal symmetry but rather through temporal asymmetry.

The chosen focus was not determined by the desire to address variety through the presentation of different socialist paradigms. On the contrary, country-specific historical developments and variance in the timing of the adaptations in each country will be shown to have determined, to a certain extent, each specific choice of socialist paradigm. In addition, variance has ensured avoiding predictable results. To attempt a comparison of the social-democratic paradigm in Serbia and Bulgaria would have produced rather foreseeable results, for example the Social Democrats’ suspicious attitude towards the countryside, predictable oscillations between the left and right wings, etc. To attempt a broadening of the comparison so as to include the Greek case would have been futile, since the social-democratic paradigm there was not only established very late but was also of negligible duration. To attempt, for example, a three-country comparative discussion of populism would also have been inconclusive. While in Serbia it developed into a

mighty political movement, in Bulgaria, due to time factors, it was very quickly superseded by Marxism. Greece was left untouched by Russian populism. Thus, having programmatically abandoned the attempt to treat one socialist paradigm in chronological symmetry, a shift in the chronological parameters used to frame the three case studies was necessary. If chronological asymmetry, therefore, informs the relationship between the three case studies, temporal symmetry to the chronological parameters of the international socialist movement connects each case to the history of European socialism. The crucial criterion—or the determining variable, in the language of comparative methodology—for the conceptualization of a timeframe for each of the three cases under examination has been *timing*. Moments in time were chosen *when an intellectual movement acquired a certain form of societal dynamic, that is, when ideas were somehow related to, or translated into, political practice*. These moments, in the three countries studied, were indeed diverse. The asynchronic comparative frame thus applied pays due respect to the actual historicity of the phenomena.⁷ This choice was determined, on the one hand, by the nature of the ideology under examination. It should be remembered that socialism represented more than an intellectual theory. Rather, it embodied an ideology with an equally strong ambition to be applied politically and practically. Socialist ideology did not simply claim to understand the world; it also claimed that it could change it. This choice was determined in addition by the desire to relate imported ideas to their context of reception and concurrently address the issue of ideological transfer and adaptation. Such a framing allowed for the exploration of that ambiguous space between social and intellectual history while retaining a *dynamic rather than a static perspective of the reception process*.

The generic, more or less shared, Ottoman-Balkan legacy provided an ideal canvas, allowing for a minimum of consensual background, against which to examine the three stories under consideration. Each case study thus may be appreciated as much for its *historical singularity* as it can be seen to be representative of a *contingent scenario of historical development*. The comparative approach suggested does not seek to establish absolute equitable standards, set up typologies and determine similarities or differences in strictly quantifiable terms. Rather, comparison is used as a means to understand historical development in a

relational manner, confirming variety in trajectories of historical development. The three stories are intertwined, at times linked comparatively by their similarities and, at others, by their differences. A variety of historical factors provided for the fact that out of *the same ingredients, different soups were brewed*. Ideally, this work aspires to confirm that *structure* is of as much significance as *contingency* in historical development. The three stories can be read against one another, in which each preceding case study is used as a useful background informing the “reading” of the following one. Each story begins where the previous has ended, and it is this “grammar” that in a certain way “glues” them together. Each case study aspires to tell a different and complementary story with respect to the issue of modernity in the Balkans.

Methodologically, the analysis moves between *discourse* and *context* or, more accurately, contexts.⁸ Multiple contextual frames—the international, regional, local, cultural and social milieus but also the master texts, the intentions, motivations and positioning of the actors, their translations, etc.—all constitute potential horizons of contextual reference. Discourses construct realities but are also reciprocally constrained by the options menu offered by the contextual frames. The book does not wish to address only the *transmission of ideas* but also, to the extent possible, the far more complicated and contested *reception process*. This approach was motivated by the desire to emphasize the dialectical nature of the transfer process, whereby ideology is not simply splashed onto a social universe but also involves a variegated process of negotiation with this universe, with highly diverse outcomes, as the three presented stories illustrate. This active relationship between transfer and its adaptation is reconstructed in various modalities. By addressing the political or social pulse these discourses were able to *generate or manipulate*, as in the case of the Serbian Radicals. By identifying the pulses to which these discourses *were able to connect* purposely, or even by default as in the case of the Bulgarian Social Democrats. Or again by addressing the reasons that led to “*failure*” to *connect to a pulse, the reasons why discourses remained without recipients* as in the case of the Greek Communists in the inter-war. Moreover, this is a failure that is to be credited less to the content of the Communists’ discourse, but rather to the determining contextual framework of Greek inter-war politics.

2. Context, Ideology, Adaptation

Socialist theory was born in the Western context both as a result of and a reaction to the exigencies of the Industrial Revolution and the maturation of the capitalistic process. It reflected and wished to address changes in the social, economic and political structure of the Western part of the old continent, envisioning their radical transformation. Socialism, an offspring of the Enlightenment legacy, followed up on the inadequacies of liberal politics and questioned anew a whole set of issues like the relationship between man and society, the creation and distribution of wealth, the configuration of relations between capital and labor, and the extension of political and social rights. As a most incisive answer to the challenges of the modern age, socialist theory was soon transported to other parts of the world, to societies on the verge of modernity, characterized by very dissimilar traditions and social structures to the initial Western matrix. In these *sui generis* societies, and due to the structural discrepancies characteristic of the cleavage between center and periphery, socialism was not, and could not be, introduced as a critique of industrial society, which remained rather the desideratum than a *fait accompli*. Instead, and as we will witness in some of the cases elaborated in this work, socialism did not represent an answer to the exigencies of modernity but in a reversed correlation received its validity foremost as a *recipe for modernization*.

Socialism entered the geographical space of the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the first place *as part of a discursive modernity informing the imaginary of change*⁹—“progress” according to the vocabulary of the nineteenth century—long before major changes in the social and economic structure would bring about the creation, either objective or subjective, of socialism’s actual subject of liberation, the working class. Socialism functioned foremost as a vehicle for *social criticism*¹⁰ and as an alternative to unfulfilled aspirations of political emancipation, before becoming an ideology associated with the labor movement. It should be mentioned, at this point, that the “discrepancy” or “displacement” in the function of transported ideologies is

not an experience unique to socialism but could be viewed as a broader predicament of the process of "transportation." Whereas liberalism in Europe was the outcome of a lengthy process of economic and social change, liberalism in the Balkans was to function as a lever in order to effect socio-economic change. Nor was liberalism in the Balkans the expression of articulate bourgeoisies but rather a model for political state building. If liberalism in the Western context signified the emancipation of bourgeois society from the state, in Balkan societies, on the contrary, the state was to function as the more developed institution¹¹ and became *de facto* the privileged domain for the creation of elites.¹² While nationalism in territorially consolidated dynastic states, such as France and Spain, was to function as a state-cementing ideology, nationalism transported to the multi-national empires of Central and Eastern Europe signified the discovery of "the people" both in social and ethnic terms and functioned as a state-creating ideology. In the case of Southeastern Europe, the establishment of state administrations, the geographic consolidation of the state and the engineering of the nation were parallel-run processes and were initiated literally *ex nihilo*. It should be emphasized, at this point, that ideologies are not transported to the periphery with a great discrepancy in time. Rather, it is the different context to which theories or ideologies are transplanted that provides for disparities in their function or for idiosyncratic adaptations.¹³ Noteworthy in this respect are the reflections of the Romanian socialist Dobrogeanu-Gherea, who emphasized the reverse correlation between structure and superstructure in the countries of the periphery. In his "Socialism in Backward Countries," Gherea argued that "the fact that the evolution of backward societies is influenced and even determined to a large extent by advanced societies gives rise to two fundamental peculiarities in the way in which backward countries evolve. The first concerns the time span of the evolution, which is shorter than in advanced countries. The second is that in backward societies political, social, juridical and other forms [the superstructure] are transformed before the socio-economic basis is developed, a basis which in advanced countries gave birth to this superstructure."¹⁴ Whereas in industrial capitalist countries social forms followed from the economic base, in peripheral societies the process was reversed. In contrast to the Western experience, the creation of independent nation-states and the establishment of institutions and procedures of mass po-

litical participation and representation took place in a period when industrialization was literally non-existent.

As already mentioned, ideologies are not necessarily transported with a time lag. Indeed, time factors almost determined the overlapping of ideologies. Characteristically, neither in Serbia nor in Bulgaria was socialism the outcome of a reaction to a mature and consolidated liberalism. On the contrary, socialism was rather a response to unfulfilled rudimentary expectations of the liberal "revolution" and to the degree that socialism could assert itself as an alternative; this was predominantly for reasons of political exigency and less due to the dynamics of social polarization. Liberalism and socialism contended, almost synchronically, for political recognition. In Serbia, liberal politics preceded only by a decade (1860s) the introduction of the socialist, or radical, critique (1870s), while in Bulgaria, liberalism and socialism made almost an equal start (1870s). Nor was socialism in the nineteenth century a reaction to a rampant, native industrial capitalism. The capitalism to which the Balkan socialists were reacting was more in the nature of the encroachment of commercial capitalism on the well-established social texture of the Ottoman past. Moreover, it was a capitalism that lacked an indigenous dynamic, destroying faster the established "habitus" of older forms of social existence than creating and consolidating new ones. For most Balkan countries, industrialization proper would not set in until the second decade of the twentieth century.

The various Balkan states that emerged in different instances in time during the nineteenth century carried, more or less, the generic imprint of the Ottoman legacy. In the political realm, as Maria Todorova has pointed out,¹⁵ this translated into an absence of political elites, since local notables were normally integrated at the lowest level of the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the Ottoman system deterred more generally the autonomous political consolidation of intermediary groups. The Ottoman period left a long-lasting imprint in the socio-economic realm, contributing most notably to the absence of a landed nobility (with exceptions, of course, like Romania and Bosnia). This resulted in the existence of a relatively free peasantry, as the small peasant holding was and remained the basic unit of production (with exceptions of course like Romania, Bosnia, part of Macedonia, etc.). The urban setting was characterized by a low degree of social differentiation due to the fact that the Balkan city functioned as a feudal category subor-

dinate to the state, failing to develop either an autonomous role or a strong independent commercial and industrial class. Finally, the Pax Ottomana left an enduring legacy in the demographic realm as a result of population movements and the interpenetration of various population groups. This resulted in a lack of clearly demarcated ethnic boundaries, or better stated, the absence of congruence between ethnic and geographic boundaries. To all the above, we may tentatively add the absence of a consolidated middle strata, at least for the nineteenth century. Balkan societies remained predominantly agrarian well into the twentieth century. In 1910, the agricultural population constituted 81.6 percent in Serbia, 80.9 in Bulgaria, 80 in Greece and 80.8 in Romania.¹⁶ The “mini” industrial spurt that set in during the first decade of the twentieth century lacked dynamic, while a more “apt” form of industrialization took place only in the second half of the 1920s.¹⁷ Given the absence of objective conditions for the reception of socialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one can not but agree with Feroz Ahmad that the dissemination of socialism could not but be based on the labor of *sympathizing intellectuals*.¹⁸

NOTES

- 1 A linear and successive chronological reconstruction of events is the key organizational principle of syntactic history. Paradigmatic history, on the other hand, pursues a problem-oriented approach. Its starting point is usually a question or a reflection of a theoretical nature, which functions as the chief organizational principle of analysis. Depending on the focus chosen, paradigmatic history can embrace very diverse cognitive operations, research strategies and narrative configurations. Though not inimical to the reconstruction of events, it is rather the conjunction between theory and history that is its most central concern. For this reason, the analysis is first and foremost informed by methodological considerations, such as the relationships between the general and the specific, structure and event, micro and the macro analysis, time and its multiple scales and fragments. See: Liakos, *Pos to parelthon ginetai istoria?* 143–151.
- 2 The literature on cultural transfer is voluminous. For some representative examples, see: Espagne and Werner, eds., *Transferts. Les relations interculturelles dans l'espace franco-allemand*; Espagne and Middell, eds., *Von der Elbe bis an die Seine*; Lüsebrink and Reichardt, eds., *Kulturtransfer im Epochenbruch*; Muhs, ed., *Aneignung und Abwehr*; Matthes, ed., *Zwischen den Kulturen?*; Budde, Konrad and Janz, eds., *Transnationale Geschichte*.

- 3 Equally rich is the literature on comparison; Some representative examples: Haupt and Kocka, eds., *Geschichte und Vergleich*; Kaelble and Schriewer, eds., *Diskurse und Entwicklungspfade*; Kaelble and Schriewer, eds., *Vergleich und Transfer*; Van der Braembussche, "Historical Explanation and the Comparative Method"; Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich*.
- 4 The debate between the historians of transfer and comparative historians is, in general, of a high epistemological quality and methodological interest. Involving by and large French and German historians, the epistemological dividing line, however, does not delineate national communities but rather transgresses them. For the most rigorous position, see: Haupt, H-G. and Kocka, "Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung" in Haupt and Kocka, eds., *Geschichte und Vergleich*, 9–45; for their opponents, see: Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, 35–49; for the third, reconciliatory position, see: Kaelble and Schriewer, eds., *Vergleich und Transfer*; also: Paulmann, "Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer"; proposing a fourth position, going beyond the existing debate, see: Werner and Zimmermann, eds., *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*.
- 5 The study is not only influenced by their insistence that transfer processes involve a whole nexus of complex and reciprocal relationships between the cultures in exchange, but also their warning against an a priori essentialization of analytical categories and/or historical entities such as the nation. It is precisely the combination of the two abovementioned arguments that constitutes their strongest objection to comparative methodology: already in the process of constructing its objects of study, comparison sets up, by its very nature, distinct demarcation lines, where normally the contours and confines between entities are fluid rather than fixed. See: Middell, "Kulturtransfer und Historische Komparatistik." On the other hand, when carried to its extremes, their criticism gives the impression of seeking to negate the comparative approach altogether, which at times sounds pretentious. See: Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, 35–49.
- 6 The "generalizing" approach seeks to investigate the generic comprehensive rules which have regulated the life of human communities in all societies past and present. For this holistic ambition it has often been criticized for wanting to "stretch" all societies on the "procrustean" bed of modernization theory. The "individualizing" approach, on the other hand, investigates differences between societies, seeking to understand their different developmental paths through diversity in historical development. Naturally, there are several "middle ways" between those two approaches. For a good overview of the schools and types of comparison, see: Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich*, particularly 25–47.
- 7 Though, at first glance, it might appear somehow precarious—particularly in the eyes of comparativists accustomed to synchronic comparison—the shift of the temporal horizon between the three cases studies has its certain analytical advantages, such as, for example, the possibility to variegate the

scales of analysis. This “game of scales,” to the degree that it respects the historicity of phenomena in the framing of the case studies, need not necessarily be regarded as a precarity. On the contrary. It can also serve as a “corrective” against too rigidly—and even ahistorically—constructed cases. Moreover, as a consequence of the shift in the time frame, a more efficient and rigorous contextualization of the same phenomena becomes imperative. Precisely because of the necessity to account for this “*décalage*” epistemologically, the comparativist is forced not only to define precisely his or her conceptual moves but also explain the logic behind the chosen research strategy. By these means, the comparative historian becomes, in the first place, accountable for the way s/he treats materials and for the epistemological and analytical tools s/he uses. In the second place, s/he becomes visible and a constituent part of the narrative s/he produces. All the above go halfway to meeting some of the worries expressed by transfer theorists in their critique of comparative research, but also to prove the compatibility of both approaches. The “game of analytical scales” is here applied in a variety of ways. One option is the variation between micro and macro approaches. Whereas the Serbian and Bulgarian cases are analyzed from a micro perspective, the case of Greece is tackled from a macro perspective. This switch of analytical angle was not merely a personal choice of this historian, but was also strongly encouraged by the actual differences in historical development. The shift allows, in the first place, for a *longue durée* insight and perhaps also for conclusions of a greater diachronic validity. The necessity to change scale is accompanied, in the second place, by the necessity to pose different questions on the historical materials. If in the case of Serbia and Bulgaria the main issue was the relatively early politicization of socialism, the question in the case of Greece had to be reversed: why did this case not experience the transfer of intact socialist paradigms, but only fragments of socialist thought? Why didn’t socialism become a political option until much later? The change of scale is, then, often accompanied by different questions, and this circumstance provides also for flexibility between the generalizing and the individualizing approaches. Moreover, a change is effectuated not only on the level of analytical scales but also in the choice of analytical tools. Whereas discourse analysis is the principal methodological instrument in the Serbian and Bulgarian cases, the case of Greece is analyzed predominantly from the standpoint of a contextual reconstruction.

- 8 For a good overview of various approaches to and discussions of major methodological problems associated with intellectual history, see: LaCapra and Kaplan, eds., *Geschichte denken*.
- 9 Modernity is elaborated here as a “break in the discourses on human beings and society” that occurred approximately two centuries ago. “This discursive rupture brought about the establishment of modern ideas as *new imaginary significations* for both individuals and society and, as such, it instituted new kinds of social and political issues and conflicts” (emphasis

- mine). Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity*, 4. For a more “conventional” discussion of modernity and its effects on the world periphery, see: Eisenstadt, *Patterns of Modernity*, vol. 1.
- 10 See: Haupt, Georges, “Naissance du Socialisme par la Critique: La Roumanie.”
 - 11 As pointedly argued by Gale Stokes: “In the Balkans, however, introduction of a state on the European model occurred in a social situation that was almost completely unprepared for it. The state, being the most developed institution in Balkan society, became also the dominant element, but whereas it operated using the same forms as its models in the West, the actual content of political activity was more consistent with traditional status societies than with the more legalistic societies from which the state forms were copied.” Stokes, “The Social Origins of East European Politics” in Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe*, 245.
 - 12 See also: Höpken, “Zwischen Bürokratie und Bürgertum.”
 - 13 When I refer to differences I am not implying deviations from a normative model of development. Consequently, I am not discussing difference in terms of “Sonderwegs” in historical development, but rather in terms of differences (variations) in historical experience. Differences do not imply neither a “distorted,” “insufficient” or “dysfunctional” emulating modernity either. See also: Mishkova, “Modernization and Political Elites.”
 - 14 Quoted in: Haupt, Georges, “Model Party: the Role and Influence of German Social Democracy in South-East Europe” in Haupt, Georges, *Aspects of International Socialism*, 57.
 - 15 Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans.”
 - 16 Daskalov and Sundhaussen, “Modernisierungsansätze” in Hatschikjan and Troebst, eds., *Südosteuropa, ein Handbuch*, 117.
 - 17 Ibid., 122–123.
 - 18 Ahmad, Feroz, “Some Thoughts on the Role of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Genesis and Development of the Socialist Movement in Turkey (1876–1923)” in Tunçay and Zürcher, eds., *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire*, 14–15.

1. The Russian Connection and the Geography of Revolution

If the itineraries via which Enlightenment thought entered the Balkans encompassed a broad geographical space, predominantly Western and Central Europe, and to a far lesser extent Eastern Europe, the itineraries of early socialism signaled a reversal of this geographical configuration. For the central-northern part of the Balkans (Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania) Russia was to become the major revolution-exporting country. Exposure to Russian influences was instrumental in the adaptation of early socialist theory (1870s–1880s). This does not go to say that variants of Western socialism did not exercise any influence in these countries, they were, however, proportionately of subordinate significance. Moreover, chunks of Western socialist thought infiltrated the Balkans in a roundabout way, often mediated, that is, through Russian channels. Almost ironically, Western ideas like Marxism were reinterpreted within the Russian context and adapted to Russian traditions and needs.³ Such an encounter between Russia and Western Marxism was the birth of Russian populism, whose adaptation we will follow in the case of Serbia. Serbian radicalism, as an adaptation of an eastern variant of socialism, was in its turn to compete within the Serbian context with more direct Western influences, such as liberalism. The case of Serbian radicalism is illustrative of the entangled itineraries in the circulation of ideas and their geographical distribution within the European peripheries.

Indisputably, *Russian populism* in its multiple variants constituted the initial and most authoritative socialist paradigm in all three countries (Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania) before it was slowly substituted by (Western) Marxism, a process that started around the mid-1880s and made headway in the 1890s. Altogether, the early influence of Russian populism in the central-northern Balkans has been underrated and deserves a thorough re-evaluation.⁴ While in Serbia Russian populism developed into a powerful political movement and was eventually institutionalized also as a political party, in Bulgaria and Romania it furnished the initial hotbed for the reception of Marxism and social

democracy. In Bulgaria, it formed a common reference point between Socialists and the early Agrarians, before agrarianism was codified theoretically by Aleksander Stamboliiski. In Romania, the centrality and the urgency of the unresolved agrarian question undermined the prospects of Marxism as a plausible alternative. Rather, a peasant-oriented populism would continue to challenge Marxism until the first decade of the twentieth century. The above picture does not apply for the most southern part of the Balkans, Greece, which, until approximately the time of the Third International, remained out of the orbit of Russian populism and Russian socialist influences altogether. Greek socialist intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries received their theoretical influences exclusively through Western channels (with the exception of Georgios Sklēros, who is an exceptional case anyhow). For the greatest part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Greek socialist intellectuals remained altogether isolated from the principal centers and paradigms of their time. This led, first, to eclectic adaptations of peripheral movements of lesser theoretical vigor like British Fabianism (Platon Drakoulēs) and French *ouvrierism* (Nikos Giannios), and second, to a negligent theoretical home production that did not achieve international standardization until approximately the First World War.

Summing up, *the linguistic border* dividing the central-northern Slavic-speaking Balkans from its most southern part demarcates and coincides with the boundary of the influence of eastern socialism in the nineteenth century. While Romance-speaking Romania was an obvious exception, the geographical proximity to Russia in this case proved the decisive criterion. Romania was a crucial junction and a gateway in the flow of illegal literature and revolutionaries from East to West and the other way around. Moreover, the first generation of Socialists/Populists in Romania was not of Romanian ethnic origin in the main. For the central-northern Balkans, the shift in paradigms (from populism to Marxism) meant a renewed shift in geographical emphasis from East to West.

Until the final prevalence of Marxism, which signaled a reorientation of emphasis towards Western Europe, a consistent alignment with Western social democracy, particularly in its German variant (SPD),⁵ and affiliation with the Second International of course, the *Russian connection* remained for the central-northern part of the Balkans a most

authoritative source. The long period of transition from one paradigm to another (1880–1890) was, moreover, characterized by a mixed and eclectic coexistence of both Eastern and Western socialist literature. Russia, as already mentioned, served as an important channel for the dissemination of Western socialist literature of both French and German provenance. One of the path-breaking exponents of Bulgarian Marxism, Dimitar Blagoev, acquainted himself with Marx's *Capital* in its Russian translation, the first foreign-language translation to appear. Altogether, the perseverance of Marxism in Bulgaria was largely due to Russian Marxism, that is, via the influence of Plekhanov and the "Liberation of Labor" group based in Switzerland. The infiltration of Marxism in Serbia went predominantly through German-speaking channels (Austria, Germany). In Romania, the passage from populism to Marxism lasted over a decade (1881–1893) and was the result of concurrent Russian (Plekhanov) and French (POF) influences. It was a short-lived victory, however, as the Romanian Social Democrats would face anew the challenge of neo-populism in the figure of Constantine Stere. The change in the socialist paradigm that took place at the end of the nineteenth century also signified a transformation in the ambitions of socialism away from a movement promoted on the voluntaristic grounds of a conscious intelligentsia targeting the generic welfare of the people, to the creation of social-democratic parties with a mandate to function as agents of specific class interests. The construction of new social identities and the elaboration of new social subjects on the grounds of "prefabricated" social categories, corresponding to the prescriptions and the taxonomies proposed by the Marxist master narrative, proved to be a troublesome and thankless task for most Balkan Social Democrats (see Chapter IV).

Russian influences in the Balkans were the result of a two-way process. On the one hand, they were the product of the exodus of Russian revolutionaries, who found refuge in the Balkans or extended their revolutionary activity there. The impulses for the early Romanian socialist/populist movement came from fleeing Russian *narodniki* from Bessarabia, who sought refuge in Romania after the unsuccessful "go to the people" movement of 1873/1874. Almost the entire first generation of socialist intellectuals active in Romania (N. P. Zubcu-Codreanu, N. K. Zudzilovskij-Russel, C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Z. C. Arbore-Ralli, P. Alexandrov) were experienced populist revolutionaries, and some among

them had already achieved prominence in the Russian revolutionary scene. They functioned as intermediaries between exiled leaders of the Russian movement abroad and their followers still active in Russia. Romania was a major passage in the flow of revolutionaries and literature from East to West and vice versa. Prominent figures like Nečaeŭ, Plekhanov and Akselrod found their first refuge in Romania. Russian Populists also immigrated to Bulgaria, notably Vladimir K. Debogori-Mokrievich, Boris Mintses and others. Despite the fact that they did not play such an influential role there as in neighboring Romania and were not instrumental in the foundation of the Socialist Party, which was exclusively the achievement of Bulgarian intellectuals, they formed part of the broader revolutionary network of exiles operative outside Russia. The Russian Populists resident in Bulgaria were among the earliest and most perspicacious critics of the Bulgarian Marxists, and, almost ironically, several of their critiques were to resurface in the theoretical dissent of the “Broad” Socialists, a controversy which is scrutinized in the second case study of this book. Russian revolutionaries participated in the Bosnian uprising of 1875, just to mention one example. In the opposite direction, the flow saw the emigration of students with the purpose of receiving a higher education in Russia. Russian educational institutions were a favorite choice among Bulgarian students. Estimates claim that approximately 500 Bulgarians received their education in Russia between 1856 and 1878, not including members of the substantial Bulgarian community permanently resident in Odessa.⁶ Linguistic affiliation facilitated the Russian connection particularly for the Serbs and Bulgarians. Affiliation to Russia was cultivated and consciously sponsored by the Russian government and the various Slav committees, like the Moscow Slavic Philanthropic Committee, which was in direct contact with the Asiatic department of the Russian Foreign Ministry. Similar pan-Slavic committees eventually sprang up in several Russian cities as part of a broader scheme to win over the Balkan Slavs for the purpose of state-sponsored pan-Slavism. Svetozar Marković, the founding figure of the Serbian radical movement received one such scholarship in order to study at the Institute of Ways and Communications in St. Petersburg. This was also the university city of Dimitŭr Blagoev, a leading figure in the Bulgarian socialist movement. Both men formed their revolutionary world-views as members of student communes, which functioned not only as self-help

groups, but also as incubation institutions for socialist revolutionaries.⁷ The fact that an education in Russia did not always result in the acquisition of a diploma, but rather in a thorough training in revolutionary ideas, is one of the fascinating aspects of these academic “pilgrimages.”

The Russian connection was extended to the heart of Europe with the creation of Russian student and *émigré* colonies in Switzerland. Propitious conditions, like the liberal atmosphere and the admission of women made Swiss universities (mainly Zurich and Geneva) particularly attractive to Russian students.⁸ The Swiss connection was most instrumental for the group of Serbian students who studied there in the 1860s and 1870s and who also formed the generation that transported the ideas of Russian populism back to Serbia.⁹ The most prominent figures of the Serbian radical movement (S. Marković, P. Todorović, N. Pašić, etc.) developed their worldview in close personal and intellectual contact with the Russian *émigré* community in Zurich.¹⁰ The seclusion of Russian students from Swiss society, partly as a consequence of poverty, but also in part due to a specific frame of mind, contributed to a large extent to communal isolation and group identity, both characteristic of the Russian student community in the 1870s. During his sojourn in Switzerland, Marković had rallied around him the faithful group of adherents who were to work with him as his closest associates in the Radical movement upon their return to Serbia. Switzerland was a nodal point also for the early populists active in Romania, who entertained close connections to Michael Bakunin in Zurich.¹¹ Bulgarian students too, notably N. Gabrovski, K. Rakovski, S. Balabanov, S. Nokov, G. Bakalov, D. Bakürdzhev, just to mention a few, received their university training there. The close connection of the generation of Bulgarian students who studied in Geneva in the late 1880s and early 1890s with the Russian Marxist group around Akselrod/Zasulich/Plekhanov and timely association of these contacts with the Second International provided this cohort with a unique opportunity to closely follow developments in the international socialist arena and clarify rather early their ideological views. By the early 1890s, the Bulgarians had slowly accomplished the passage from populism to Marxism, a circumstance testified by the early institutionalization of the Socialist Party (1891) and the adaptation of the Erfurt program by 1893. The passage to Marxism was more complicated for the Serbian Socialists, since the local tradition of radicalism functioned as an “attraction pole” that in a

certain way “diluted” and partially “delayed” the imperative of a party with a social profile. Despite the presence of intellectuals with Marxist leanings, a social-democratic party was founded in Serbia only in 1903. The differences in the passage from populism to Marxism in Bulgaria and Serbia provide for an interesting contrast. In both countries the crucial decade was the period of the 1880s–1890s, characterized, as already mentioned, by theoretical fluidity and eclecticism. In Serbia, the institutionalization of populism in the Radical Party and the Radicals’ later incorporation of Marxist argumentation frustrated a clear break in the change of paradigm. Until the institutionalization of the Social Democratic Party, some of the intellectuals concerned with social issues showed a tendency to integrate into the Radical Party, while the borders between Radicals and Socialists were fluid. The change of paradigm was accomplished by different generations within the span of more than twenty years.¹² In Bulgaria, firstly because of the belated institutionalization of the Bulgarian principality (1878), and secondly owing to the fact that the Bulgarian Socialists found each other in a period when a change of paradigm was taking place in the international scene (1880s–1890s), the break with populism was accomplished by the same generation of intellectuals which had been schooled in populism but who then were almost entirely converted to Marxism. Their early schooling in populism, however, left a substratum of non-negligible influence, evidenced in the Bulgarian Socialists’ dexterity for popular propaganda, a capacity to use populist language and themes and a sense of what it meant to “go to the people.” As will be demonstrated in the chapter on Bulgaria, these Socialists made use of their populist training particularly when they addressed the countryside, reflecting their own choice but also because this suited the constraints imposed by rural social structures.

In conclusion, it may be argued that the Russian and/or, by extension, the Swiss connections were instrumental in the initiation of the early Serbian, Bulgarian and, in a different manner, Romanian Socialists. The majority—almost in absolute numbers—of the intellectuals in these countries who turned to socialism had received their education in one or the other “Meccas” of revolution. This is not to say that connections to Western socialism did not exist; they were, however, quantitatively weaker at this early stage.

2. Models and Master Texts

The Russian influence was not limited to the transmission of literature or the plain adaptation of theoretical populism. The Russian revolutionary movement (from the 1860s to the 1880s) also furnished the intelligentsia model that Balkan socialist intellectuals (Greece is always excepted) were to adopt. Despite the fact that neither the Serbs nor the Bulgarians were to come close to achieving anything like an intelligentsia in the full sense that it acquired in Eastern Europe, that is, forming a distinct social stratum, they adopted the outlook and the programmatic function of their Russian colleagues and self-fashioned themselves according to the Russian archetype. It was, therefore, this normative definition of intelligentsia that was instructive for the Balkan socialist intellectuals. The uniqueness of the eastern intelligentsia lay in the fact that “while all other classes and strata of Eastern Europe have had their equivalents in the West, the intelligentsia, strictly speaking, did not.”¹³ A further contrast to the Western experience was the fact that neither the bourgeoisie proper nor the petit bourgeoisie played a significant role in its formation. The emergence of the intelligentsia as a specific social stratum in Russia and Poland is to be credited to specific historical processes that took place in both countries in the nineteenth century: on the one hand, the deterioration of the feudal system in Russia and, on the other, the discrimination against and pauperization of the nobility in partitioned Poland. The intelligentsia consisted of individuals from a variety of occupations and diverse educational levels, who, however, shared certain beliefs, attitudes and manners and, above all, a common spiritual culture. In both countries it was formed predominantly by members of the *declassé* fraction of the landed nobility, who sought out specific occupations and an education that would allow them to retain status and their contact with the higher echelons of society. The principal institution for the inculcation of these values was the educational system, whose graduates were expected to “fill the ranks of a charismatic stratum whose members’ fundamental social role was to lead the nation to its destiny.”¹⁴ The motivations were di-

verse. In the case of Russia they involved the abolition of tsarism and the destruction of the old order; in that of Poland, the liberation and reconstruction of an independent nation-state. The intelligentsia developed a strong sense of distinctiveness from other social strata, formed a separate cultural and social environment, and, most importantly, nurtured a particular ethos. Although it produced leaders of diverse social movements, its most exemplary representatives were to be found principally in the service of democratic and leftist ideologies: "social progress, revolution and national independence."¹⁵ Apart from forming a distinct social stratum, the eastern intelligentsia was characterized by a particular psychological disposition. As emphasized by James Billington:

It was this passion for philosophic totality, a sense of unity in the common search for the truth, which makes it essential to distinguish from the beginning the Russian term *intelligent* from "intellectual," in the specialized, somewhat pedantic sense in which the term is often understood in the West. Belinsky confessed in the forties that "for me, to think, feel, understand and suffer are one and the same thing." For the Russian *intelligent*, thought was inextricable from the totality of human existence. The problems with which "thinkers" should deal could not be anything less than the total problems of meaning and purpose. Many of the distinctive characteristics of the intelligentsia—hatred of Tsarist bureaucracy, repudiation of *meshchanstvo* (bourgeois philistinism), hostility in pure form in art, and opposition to the *posredstvennost* (mediocrity) that enshrouds lives unmoved by great questions—are merely corollaries to this belief that their quest was for ultimates. The intelligentsia was animated not only by a thirst for truth, but by a passion for social justice.¹⁶

The rich Russian legacy of social and literary criticism (Belinski, Dobroljubov, Herzen, etc.), but also the more programmatic visions of the intellectual revolutionary, provided the blueprint for the activity of several generations of Balkan national revolutionaries and/or socialists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Fairly typical of the first category is the formation of the Bulgarian liberation intelligentsia, while the early Serbian Radicals are fairly representative of the second type. The cornerstone of populist doctrine was the idea of *narod* (the people), a quasi-visionary faith in the superior wisdom and sanctity of the people. In the theoretical construction of the populists, *narod* implied more than simply a cult of the virtues of the common man; "the

people” were regarded as a life-giving force for social regeneration. Central to populism was the belief that the intelligentsia had the moral duty to raise the intellectual and moral standards of the common people through enlightenment and education. This premise was buttressed further through a voluntaristic attitude towards history, in which the philosopher-intellectual-revolutionary was considered capable of intervening in and determining the course of events, and consequently the course of history. A major constitutive element in the identity-building process of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia was a strong sense of alienation from society.

It may be argued strongly that from the various currents of Russian populist thought represented in Serbia and Bulgaria, the more legalistic, evolutionary options prevailed over the narrowly conspirative or Blanquist alternatives. This predilection appears sensible in light of the fact that socialist intellectuals in the Balkans were not faced with the same exigencies as their Russian colleagues. They had, in part, to confront peremptory political systems but certainly not the extremities of tsarist autocracy. Nor did they have to operate in countries still burdened by the institution of serfdom. On the contrary, they lived in countries where the small yeoman and his property were more or less the norm (with exceptions, of course, like Romania or Bosnia). The absence of firm and articulate anti-etatist and anti-religious attitudes provides for an additional contrast to the Russian case. Here again, it was the divergent historical experience that accounted for the difference. In the Balkans the institution of the state was a recent acquisition, and moreover it had come about as the “result” of revolutionary, politically emancipatory movements. The establishment of states aiming to reflect the standards of the nineteenth century had been the most manifest proof of modernity in the Balkans. Even more remarkable is the quasi-general absence of anti-clerical tones in the Balkan socialist discourses. Here we have an additional contrast not only to the Russian but also to the experiences won in southern Italy and southern Spain, where socialism and anarchism were directed, among other things, against the institution of the church. The absence of anti-clericalism raises some interesting questions about the status of religion as part of the Ottoman legacy and its more generic socio-cultural function in the Balkans. It could be argued tentatively that to the extent that socialism was able to connect to popular culture in the Balkans, not only it did not antag-

onize religion and the church, but, on the contrary, it connected rather easily to popular notions of morality and kinship solidarity and managed to mobilize echelons of the lower clergy, fusing, in a certain way, a socialist and later communist ethos with religious values. There is a diachronic quality to this kind of ideological syncretism that can be observed in such diverse cases as the example of the Serbian Radicals in the nineteenth century, or the communist-led resistance movement in Greece in the twentieth.¹⁷

The intelligentsia that formed the current of classical Russian populism in the 1860s and 1870s also engineered the raw model of the pioneering intellectual that we encounter among the Balkan socialist intellectuals at approximately the same time. In Russia, it produced such unprecedented effects as the “going to the people” movement. In contrast to the Western model of the engaged, committed and politically sensitive intellectual with a claim to intervene in, influence and guide public opinion, the Russian intelligent was constructed as a “New Type” of human being, whose social and political activity was not an amateur endeavor but a *professional revolutionary vocation*. Despite remarkable differences in the models and the means of revolution, from Lavrov’s conception of a broad mass popular party to Tkachev’s narrow conspiratorial revolutionary elite, the role of the intelligentsia as the political avant-garde *per se* is unquestionably a common denominator. The model they advanced propagated the triumph of consciousness and will over being, and the “psychological religiosity” that characterized its bearers was reflected in the promulgation of new theories as “new faith.”¹⁸

Of the programmatic texts to have enjoyed both popularity and broad circulation among socialist intellectuals in the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth century, Nikolai Chernyshevsky’s *What Is To Be Done?* (1862) and Peter Lavrov’s *Historical Letters* (1867–1869) stand out by far as the most instructive treatises on the role and the duties of socialist intellectuals and may properly be considered master texts. More than the actual title, it was the subtitle of Chernyshevsky’s novel that best conveyed his actual intention, for *What Is To Be Done?* told the tale of the “New People,” a designation that quickly became established in the literature of the times and came to stand for a new type of human being and a distinct new form of a fulfilled, emancipated and just social existence. The novel promulgated not only an overt

and forceful social message but prophesized also a new heroic era of human coexistence between conscious and willed human beings. Obviously intended to have a didactic character, it was written in the belief that the activity of its principal heroes and heroines would quickly attract emulation.¹⁹ In his novel, Chernyshevsky echoed diverse Western influences, from the feminism of Georges Sand to the socialist experiment of David Owen, which he effectively reconstructed in fiction by staging the lives of his principle heroes in a cooperative workshop.

The novel²⁰ follows the fortunes of a typical lower middle-class Russian girl, who not only manages to escape the tyranny of her patriarchal home but grows, with the help of and through association with the “New People,” into an emancipated and fulfilled “new” human being. *What Is To Be Done?* is above all a novel about people associating with each other, building an ever-growing human chain of solidarity and emancipation. The basic theme is an unbroken bond of support, passing the “good” from one person to the other and constantly extending the family of the “New People.” Initiates become the catalysts of the re-education of others through proselytizing, appropriate readings and by offering them a different perspective on life. The characters of the novel are not intended to stand as complicated psycho-portraits but rather as proto-types of the new composite positive hero. Through hard and persistent work and study, the characters transform themselves by acquiring ever-growing degrees of higher consciousness. This deliberate emphasis on the merits of self-education, that is, education for the purpose of appreciating and rationally understanding the world beyond formalistic and institutional requirements, is one of the most durable and assertive motifs of the novel. The “New People” are, moreover, people of extreme consequence and reliability. They do not simply promulgate new principles. Ideological credo and life practice go hand in hand and are absolutely congruent. Chernyshevsky announces the arrival of this new type of human being with a quasi-messianic voice, expressing the certitude that, in the future, they will not constitute an exception but rather the standard of mankind.

It has not long been with us, this type ... It has not been with us for any length of time and yet is growing fast ... but it doesn't matter how it's seen today when in a few, a very few years' time it will be called upon to “save us!” and say the word to rule us all; ... *As the years pass people will*

come to say "they left a better world behind them but a bad one nonetheless." And it will be a sign that the time has come for the type to rise again, and rise it will, its ranks swollen, its aspect improved, and there will be more of the good then and a better good too. History will repeat itself in a new way. And so it will continue until it is said now at last life is good," by which point there shall be no separate type but that all are in it and aghast to think there was ever a time when they were an exception and not the universal type.²¹

In *What Is To Be Done?* sophisticated socialist principles acquire an air of realism and feasibility—herein also lies a great part of its appeal—as if they could be materialized as soon as tomorrow with a bit of good will. The heroes are not invested with the dramatic dimensions of titans but with the magnanimity of ordinary people. The “New People” are impressive but not extraordinary or supra-natural human beings; rather they are exemplary for the model of the self-made, consciously and willingly emancipated individual. This didactic content was simple but powerful; what these characters had achieved was a standard that could be attained by anybody.

Why, I am willing to bet they impressed the majority of you out there as heroes, higher beings, idealized and perhaps too good to be true. No, my friends, my mean and piteous friends, you are mistaken: they are not so high but that you are infinitely lower ... *This level can and must be attained by all ... the characters shown in full you can equal, should you choose to work at it ... Rise from your gutter, oh my wretched friends, come to the light of day, rejoice in freedom found; it is easy, irresistible, if you would only try. Watch and think and read the books that speak of pure pleasure, of virtue and happiness. Books to gladden the heart, signs to stimulate, and thoughts to thrill—that's all there is to it. No sacrifice, deprivation; just a hunger for happiness, for whose sake you will work on yourself with a will. Lord, the untold pleasure known to the fully developed man! What any other would count for loss, he takes for pleasure too; his heart, wide open to joy, is filled to overflowing. If you would only try!*²²

The philosophical underpinning motivating Chernyshevsky's heroes to action is the principle of “rational egoism,” that is, the identification of their own interests with the interests and the welfare of society as a whole. Quite different was the concept of Lavrov, who a generation later furnished an even more forceful manifesto for the intelligentsia. Both shared, however, an “anthropological point of view,” which took the integral psycho-physical human individual as its starting point. Whereas

Chernyshevsky's anthropologism emphasized more material properties, Lavrov's philosophical starting point stressed history and ethics rather than the natural sciences. Nevertheless, both took a strong interest in consciousness and laid strong emphasis on education and self-development. Moreover, both developed their philosophical systems in opposition to Hegel and his notion of an *a priori* "Historical Reason." Rationality was imparted to history by rational human beings.²³

Along with his contemporary and fellow theoretician of populism, Mikhailovski, Lavrov insisted on the primacy of the "subjective method" in sociology. They developed their epistemological approach in opposition to theories of historical necessity, which presumed progress to be an objective and inescapable process, the outcome of objective laws of history and iron laws of political economy. According to Andrej Walicki, the concept of "subjective sociology" could be summarized in three major points. It represented, in the first place, a defense of "ethicism," claiming moral values to be irreducible to scientific facts and upholding the imperative of moral protest against human suffering and injustice, irrespective of objective conditions. It postulated "an epistemological and methodological standpoint" disputing the scholar's objective access to sociological phenomena, considering the knowledge-gaining process to be contingent upon the scholar's own standpoint. Thirdly, it formulated a "philosophy of history," according to which the subjective factor—human thought and will—played a decisive and creative role in the development of the historical process.²⁴

Lavrov developed his "anthropologism" in conscious opposition to the materialist extremists in Russia, and despite the fact that, like them, he drew upon the scientific knowledge of Western secular culture, he pursued a quite different objective. Lavrov contended that materialism was insufficient and unscientific for the study of the phenomena of human consciousness. The study of the "phenomenology of spirit" could proceed only by means of the subjective method of introspection. He insisted on the autonomy of history and psychology as independent sciences and not inferior to the natural sciences. He considered phenomena of consciousness to be primary, not solely because consciousness provided access to the external world and was thus the basic condition for all observation and science, but also because it was consciousness that constructed theories about the world. Although affirming phenomenistic positivism he insisted on the necessity to account for both ex-

ternal sensory and internal non-sensory phenomena of consciousness and history. Similarly to Comte, he started with a positivistic critique of metaphysics, but did not conclude with a rejection of the subjective world. Rather, Lavrov derived his positivism from Kant. His "affirmation of the autonomy of the moral consciousness, the basis of his practical philosophy, follows the Kantian inspiration in establishing a moral world, independent of the physical, in which man's moral values gain legitimate and elevated status."²⁵ Moral ideals and evaluation criteria were essential methodological building blocks of his philosophy of history. There existed no objective laws of development, and historical facts were always unique and unrepeatable. It was thus always the historian's task to develop the criteria allowing for the selection, organization and evaluation of endless historical facts into meaningful narratives. Moreover, developing the appropriate criteria was, by definition, a subjective operation, since the process of selection always hinged on the historian's social ideal. In the end, it was up to the historian to impart meaning in history, and such meaning was necessarily contingent upon the scholar's views and principles.

Progress was, according to Lavrov, the substance of the historical process. The quintessence of "progress" consisted in the substitution of inferior intellectual systems by superior ones, a process that came about as a result of man's conscious striving to imbue social forms with moral ideals. The emphasis "on consciousness as the source of all distinctively human and all historical action is so great that for him all history is intellectual history; men's philosophical views are the ultimate sources of his historical action. But to *make* history these views must be expressed through the active creation and re-creation of intellectual and social forms."²⁶ Lavrov's system is but a "moralistic, activist positivism which calls on the philosopher to make history."²⁷

In the *Historical Letters*, apart from the aforementioned philosophy of history, Lavrov elaborated on the role of "critically thinking individuals" as the principle agents of history and the sole carriers of progress. As observed by Walicki, Lavrov "can be called an ideologist of the intelligentsia as an ethical category, that is, in the nineteenth-century Russian meaning of the term intelligentsia. He was not a spokesman of professional intellectuals but an ideologist of intelligentsia as a community of human beings of superior moral and intellectual sensitivity committed to the struggle against social injustice."²⁸ The principal thesis as

laid out in the fourth letter, entitled the “Cost of Progress,” expanded on the notion of the debt incurred diachronically by the privileged educated minority regarding the exploited toiling majority. After having defined progress as “the physical, intellectual and moral development of the individual, the incorporation of truth in social institutions,”²⁹ Lavrov concluded that only a small portion of mankind had succeeded in enjoying the fruits of progress, at the great cost of the rest. For this small group of people to appear, who had managed to cultivate their human dignity, extend their knowledge, clarify their thoughts, strengthen their characters and establish a more commodious way of life, the majority had to struggle:

Mankind has paid dearly so that a few thinkers sitting in their studies could discuss its progress. It has paid dearly for a few little colleges where it has trained its teachers—who to this day, however, have brought it little benefit. If one were to count the educated minority of our time and the number of people who have perished in the past in the struggle for its existence, and estimate the labor of the long line of generations who have toiled solely to sustain their lives and allow others to develop, and if one were to calculate how many human lives have been lost and what a wealth of labor has been spent for each individual now living a *somehow* human life—if one were to do all this, no doubt some of our contemporaries would be horrified at the thought of the capital in blood and labor which has been lavished on their cultivation. What serves to soothe their sensitive consciences is that such a calculation is impossible. Perhaps what ought to be horrifying, however, is not that the progress of the minority has been so costly, but that it has been *so* costly and that for this price *so* little has been achieved. If the minority had troubled itself sooner and more diligently ... the quantity of wasted lives and labor would not be so great; the debt incurred by each of us would be smaller, and would not increase so enormously with each generation ... Each generation is answerable to posterity only for what it *could have* done but did not do.³⁰

Critically thinking individuals, conscious of the debt accumulated through generations, had to undertake everything possible within their capacities in order to diminish it. It was—and herein lies the forcefulness of Lavrov’s argument—an imperative “moral duty” of the critically thinking individual to repay the cost of progress. Notwithstanding the fact that it was impossible to undo the past, or repay the cost of exclusive cultivation, critically thinking and reflexive individuals had to make use of precisely this consciousness as a stimulus for action:

I shall relieve myself of the responsibility for the bloody cost of my own development if I utilize this same development to diminish evil in the present and in the future. If I am a cultivated person I am obliged to do this, but for me this obligation is very light, since it coincides exactly with what constitutes pleasure for me: by seeking and disseminating greater truth, by coming to understand what social order is most just and striving to realize it, I am increasing my own pleasure and at the same time doing everything I can for the suffering majority in the present and in the future. And so my task is limited to one simple rule: live according to the ideal which yourself have set up as the ideal of a *cultivated man*.³¹

In order to “reimburse” their “debt,” critically thinking individuals had to make every effort to extend the amenities of material comforts, intellectual and moral development to the majority, and strive simultaneously to introduce scientific knowledge and justice into social institutions. Initially conceived in the brain of one individual, ideas spread and grew qualitatively with the growth of the moral and intellectual stature of other individuals and quantitatively with the increase of their numbers. An idea became a “social force” when individuals realized their unity in thought and resolved upon common action; it triumphed when it was introduced into social institutions. Lavrov did not expound a theory of an intellectual elite; on the contrary, he scorned the learned who indulged in knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Negligence in putting one’s own learning to useful application equaled denying service for the betterment of mankind. Idealizing the simple people, “these invisible heroes of humanity,” Lavrov emphasized their superior importance over the great figures of history, for it was they who sustained the tradition of human dignity and the consciousness of what is best. However, the “invisible heroes” contained only the potentiality of progress; its actualization belonged to those who had freed themselves from the everyday burdens of material existence.

A true social theory represented the fusion of social and particular interests. In a similar vein to Chernyshevsky and his principle of “rational egoism,” Lavrov postulated the necessity that an individual cultivate his/her understanding of social issues, which were effectively congruent with his/her own interests. Introducing, thus, truth and justice into social institutions was not some kind of abstraction but rather in the individual’s most intimate personal interest. Lavrov, just like Chernyshevsky, emphasized the value of education and knowledge as indis-

pensable equipment for the critically thinking individual. This point differentiated him from other populists like Bakunin, for example. Both men rejected the political revolution for Russia and put their hopes in the commune as the nucleus of future societal organization. Moreover, both shared the conviction that the revolution had to be brought about by the people themselves. Their paths to revolution differed however.³² For Lavrov, ever-increasing knowledge was a fundamental prerequisite for the revolutionary, and precisely this aspect accounts for the appeal of Lavrovism among the studying youth. In contrast to Bakunin, who advocated immediate and spontaneous action, Lavrov insisted that the way to revolution had to go through science, and for this purpose concocted a new synthesis of science and social action.³³ An individual could only develop normally in interaction with social life, and, conversely, fruitful social action took place only with the participation of cultivated individuals.

Ideas in Lavrov's theoretical system were not a mere appendix of history but the actual stuff that moved history forward. "History takes place only under the influence of the work of *thought*"³⁴ and thought is "the only factor which *humanizes* social culture."³⁵ History progressed through the action of "fighters," who united into a social force. The task of the individual was thus to trace and to unite with his similarly minded comrades. Unity in a social force and paradigmatic existence were of primary significance:

Not words alone but deeds are needed. Vigorous, fanatical men are needed who will risk everything and are prepared to sacrifice everything. Martyrs are needed, whose legend will far outgrow their true worth and their actual service. Energy they never had will be attributed to them; the best ideas and the best sentiments of their followers will be put into their mouths. For the multitude they will become unattainable, impossible ideals. But on the other hand their legend will inspire thousands with the energy needed for the fight. The words they never uttered will be repeated—at first only half-understood, then understood better and better. The ideas which never animated the original ideal historical figure will be embodied in the work of succeeding generations as if inspired by him. The number of those who perish is not important: legend will always multiply it to the limits of possibility.³⁶

Social action was to be put into practice through the creation of a mass party, determined not only to fight but also to win. Prerequisites were

firm organization, meticulous planning, patient endurance of failure and the necessity to take advantage of every occasion available in order to become “a real organic force in society in the fight for truth and justice.” Victory was important, yet not as a value in itself, “not *who* has won but *what* has won ... It is the triumphant idea that is important.”³⁷ The oppressed were bound to embrace and support the struggle for the truth. Fighting for truth and justice meant bringing social institutions into step with the actual needs that generated them. For these reasons, Lavrov was opposed to false idealizations of the nation, law and the state (which will be discussed more extensively in the ideological credo of Svetozar Marković in the following section on Serbian radicalism).

Critical inquiry was a lifelong affair, a habit that a human being should acquire and master in order to merit being called a cultivated person. The moment when an individual would be called upon to do his/her duty was unclear; therefore, the critically thinking individual had to remain in a state of perpetual preparation. Critical inquiry culminated in the attainment of faith, the ultimate and necessary precondition for action. “Yes, faith—and only faith—can move mountains. At the moment of action it must possess a man or he will prove powerless, at the very moment when he must summon up his strength.”³⁸ Faith was the condition achieved when the process of critical inquiry had been completed and a new truth had emerged: “Faith is a psychical or overt activity in which consciousness is present but critical inquiry is absent. When an idea has taken possession of me which I no longer analyze but which is basic to my analysis of other ideas and concepts, I have faith in this idea.” Faith was opposed to critical inquiry not in essence but in time as each belonged to a different stage in the development of thought.

Working for and in the name of science did not imply isolation from life and its burning questions. On the contrary, science had to be “completely permeated by life, is itself life in all fullness of these burning questions.” Any knowledgeable human being who shunned the task of actualizing progress was aiding stagnation and routine. The *moral duty of the agent of progress* was to preach, gain supporters and organize. At the same time, the critically thinking individual had to develop a self-reflexive attitude towards the dominant system, fight systemic influences within him/herself through a process of reeducation and self-distancing from normative certainties. Moreover, the critically thinking

individual had to be himself/herself the actual embodiment of his/her principles. Just like Chernyshevsky, Lavrov demanded nothing less than the absolute congruence between creed and practical personal life.

According to Lavrov, progress was the best potential direction of the course of history. The struggle for progress was the obligatory promotion of this potential direction of events. Progress was materialized when disseminating the kind of critical thought that assisted personal human development and a sounder social order. A consciousness of solidarity was necessary between the highly developed individual and less-developed social groups, and the reconstruction of social relationships in that spirit. Progress, therefore, was possible only when the highly developed minority became firmly convinced that, in the name of a sound social order, its interests were identical with the interests of the majority, and when the highly developed individuals had developed the abovementioned postulate into a moral conviction:

Perhaps these readers will understand, too, that the questions of the day derive their true, essential interest precisely from the timeless historical questions which the author has taken up in these letters. Such readers will understand that it is *they*, as individuals, who must complete the work of critical thought on contemporary culture. That it is *they* who must repay, with their thought, life, and action, their share of the enormous accumulated cost of progress. That it is *they* who must set their conviction against the falsehood and injustice existing in society. That it is *they* who must make up the growing force that speeds the march of progress. If these letters find even a few such readers, then the author's task has been fulfilled.³⁹

3. The Balkan Disciples

The fact that the Russian model provided for emulation is attested in the texts of several Balkan socialist intellectuals, stressing the regenerating, avant-guard role of the intelligentsia and the moral duty of intellectuals to advance progress and enforce social justice. Commenting on his early student years and the impact that his Russian colleagues exercised upon him and his fellow Serbian students in Switzerland, Pera Todorović, a leading figure of the Serbian Radicals, stressed that:

In any case, the living example of the Russian nihilists influenced us more than any other. Faith is contagious—and when we saw how our Russian friends believed unconditionally in socialism, we believed too. In our eyes the truthfulness of socialism was fully proven by the fact that they were young men and women. And such men and women! Willing to perish on the gallows or spend their best years in Russian mines for this socialism ... We read a lot ... and yet again practical work meant a lot more to us than theory. Our Russian friends told us: Study above all through life and struggle. This way you will first of all learn what you have to do. Indubitably, life is hard, you will be chased, exposed to temptation, and experience disappointment. But if you are imbued with the right faith, it will stand firm against difficulties and, on the contrary, you will be strengthened ... This discourse of our Russian friends had such an influence on us that many could not wait to finish school, but rushed immediately to the struggle. They called us the party of the “non-graduated students.”⁴⁰

The mass party that the Radicals set in motion was of Lavrovian inspiration and its leaders fulfilled his prescriptions to the last word. In his autobiographical *Bloody Year*, Todorović comments on the character of the Radicals in the crucial first years of the 1880s: “It’s true; radicalism had started acquiring the character of a faith. The true Radicals, those people whose tongue and heart were in accord, those who spoke only what they felt and felt only what they spoke; these people had already started acquiring all symptoms of religious fanatics. Should it have continued this way, radicalism would unavoidably be a powerful religious sect today, which could have soon transgressed [the borders] of

the principality and taken hold of other Balkan regions as well.”⁴¹ The historian Slobodan Jovanović comments on the qualities of Todorović:

Todorović did not conceive of the Radical Party as an ordinary party. For him, as for the Russian revolutionaries, politics was a matter of faith: an individual had to carry his entire soul in his principles, living no other life but that for the party and in the party. Todorović remembered what a Russian revolutionary, Nečaev, wrote: “Every member of our cooperative is a convict. He has no individual interests, personal things, feelings, responsibilities, nor property, not even a name, since he is only occupied by one single interest, one single thought, one single passion—revolution.” It strongly reminds me of the old Jesuit principle; *perinde ac cadaver* ... The Radical Party had to be a kind of conspiracy, a brotherhood for life or death. Whoever entered the party had to separate himself from the whole world and become a rival of the whole world in order to be able to serve the party more faithfully.⁴²

The Russian model also had a massive impact on Bulgarian socialist intellectuals in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Nikola Gabrovki's brochure *Nravstvennata zadacha na inteligentsiata* (The moral duty of the intelligentsia),⁴³ first published in 1889, had a tremendous resonance among youth and remained for several years an authoritative text in the catechism of young cadres in the teachings of socialism. It served as the programmatic text accompanying the creation of “New Life,” envisioned as an enlightened forum which would organize literary evenings as well as a free evening and Sunday school for workers. As already alluded by its title, Gabrovski's text was a resourceful amalgamation of the basic tenets of Lavrov and Chernyshevsky, admixed with pauperofilia themes and distant echoes of Lassalleanism and French radical thought. It is, moreover, a good example of the eclecticism prevalent in Bulgarian socialist thought not only in the 1880s but also in the early 1890s. *Nravstvennata zadacha* began with an ethical pledge, a deep existential problematic, often encountered as a common literary topos not only in the master texts but also in testimonies of socialists of the times. Confrontation with the famous, quintessential “damned” question was the first indispensable step in the construction of the intelligent:

Why do I exist in this world? What is the significance of my life? How do I have to live in order not to grow bored of life? Should I allow external

circumstances to rule and sway me as they come along, or should I work out strong moral principles which will fuse thought and content in my life and will indicate the way of my activity? ... Anybody who reckons himself to be a human being and wants to live like one with a purpose in life is forced to decide the moral principles of his existence. This is even more mandatory for the intelligentsia—the social force which stands at the head of society and shows the way to cultural development and general happiness.⁴⁴

According to Gabrovski, these were the issues that every critically thinking individual had to decide for him/herself, the more so as Bulgaria seemed to be sinking into an unprincipled and meaningless political life. He lamented the fact that the educated youth were principally attracted to the civil service and its comforts. Easily absorbed either by the civil service or the existing political parties, young intellectuals became an extension of a corrupt political system. Looking contemptuously down on the people, the civil servants were the most dangerous stratum and their “terrible bureaucratic spirit ha[d] penetrated the remotest houses” in the country, while the young generation was left without a raw model. What was needed was a moral force that could illuminate the way towards an ideal and awake educated individuals from their intellectual laziness. To the question, “What is to be done? Where is salvation?” Gabrovski saw the answer in the creation of “real” intelligentsia, the force that “pushes history forward, brings new ideals in life and struggles to implement them in reality,” and whose task consisted in the conscious formation of culture and new social forms attuned to real human needs. The intelligentsia acknowledged that there could be no human and intellectual dignity in a social order where a minority monopolized the benefits of culture and science.

To fight against social sufferings and injustice, to uproot the old and established institutions in life, to protest against everything that impedes the normal development of human qualities and to preach with courage and self-sacrifice the truth for a better social order—this is the principal task of the progressive intelligentsia. In the name of this moral task the intelligentsia is obliged to sacrifice its personal interests; it has to spend all its energy in the struggle for the realization of its convictions. [The intelligentsia] always marches ahead—in the front line of the progressive movement and clears the way towards general welfare. The people would eternally slumber in the diapers of their intellectual development; they would never be capable of breaking the shackles of repulsive tyranny were it not

for the conscious protest against the old institutions in society. *The apostles of new truths*, the pioneers of social ideals, never face public opinion with awe. They rise above the ugly reality and struggle heroically against human suffering and injustice. Each and every single right in history has been won through persistent struggle and not with servile silence.⁴⁵

Political order had always rested in the hands of the wealthy classes, who maintained a prerogative over legislation and violence. In contemporary times, however, the poor had come to realize their rights and dignity, and the development of science opened the way to individual freedom as humans realized that they did not exist for the social order, but vice versa. An intelligentsia conscious of the evil in society had to fight for the truth, preach it among the people and infuse it in social forms. It was paramount to remember that the educated human being had a debt to repay to society.

The [people's] sufferings have to become yours; the [people's] welfare, your welfare; otherwise you will never feel and understand the people's interests and, consequently, never become their servant. But, above all, care to develop critical faculties if you desire to work honestly for the people. A life without principles, a struggle without conscious convictions, resembles a ship, sailing without a wheel and compass in the midst of the stormy waves of the ocean ... [S]ocietal storms are even more merciless; they squash everyone who does not have the moral force to resist them ... The sensible and honest leader is obliged to study popular life, to delve into the depth of the popular soul and from [it] draw the strength of his convictions. For this purpose, he has to come closer to the people, to enter into a close spiritual connection [with them].⁴⁶

Lively and affectionate participation in the events of popular life, honest association with the working masses, feeling the popular pulse, the precise study of social phenomena with the assistance of science: practical activity had to be founded on a solid scientific basis, the more so given that the universal validity of scientific knowledge ruled out the possibility of separate developmental paths. One and the same torrent moved humanity forward, making false patriotism an anachronism. Intellectuals thus needed to unite into a collectivity with these same convictions and develop into a weighty social force. The realization of an idea depended on the sincere commitment of the fighters and their perseverance in struggle. Social leaders had to be absolutely committed and resolute to be, as the French say, "*des vrais intransigents*."

Gabrovski appealed for a drive towards the multiplication of associations, which as genuine “moral oases” would facilitate the union of the country’s young intellectual forces and create the moral atmosphere where “the type of the New People will be educated and formed.” Moreover, it was necessary to write and propagandize in a simple language accessible to the majority and continue enlightenment work through public lectures, publications and night schools. The state needed to participate actively in this effort, since it was the peoples’ labor that sustained the state machinery. Gabrovski warned, at the same time, against uncritical adaptations of European institutions and ideas. In order to develop an authentically popular movement it was necessary to go to the villages, “this laboratory of popular life,” and study its pains and sufferings. His appeal was directed mainly towards high-school teachers, who were urged to support the common effort and create enlightenment societies in every city and village in Bulgaria, fulfilling thus “their apostolic mission among the people.” Moreover, teachers had to live up to the model created by their “brother teachers” during the liberation struggle.

Konstantin Bozveliev from Kazanlúk, one of the veteran Bulgarian Socialists and a co-founder of the Social Democratic Party, may justifiably be described as a self-made intellectual. Bozveliev did not attend university, either in Bulgaria or abroad; nevertheless he owned a remarkable library and was an autodidact in three foreign languages. In his memoirs, Bozveliev vividly remembers his early intellectual formation. In the late 1880s he came under the influence of—the then popular—Darwinian and Spencerian ideas, until he met Spiro Gulapchev. At that time, Gulapchev’s reputation had run ahead of him, and his name was well-known among the progressive youth and “encircled with the halo of a martyr for ideas.” Bozveliev and Gulapchev first became acquainted and had a short discourse on social issues in 1887, when the latter passed through Kazanlúk on his way to Gabrovo:

Gulapchev exposed to me the inadequacies and injustices of the contemporary social order, the economic inequality—big riches on the one hand, big poverty on the other—, which leads also to political inequality, since the rich have always a greater influence on the state and de facto hold the power in their hands. He exposed how a great part of society lives in difficult conditions, forced labor, small salaries, bad and insufficient nutrition, inadequate rest, small and unhygienic homes, etc., while the other part

of this society almost does not work, makes use of all the material and cultural benefits and swims in pleasure, like a kidney in fat. Concluding, Gulapchev emphasized the need for a deep social reform, which would eliminate these injustices in society and would give all the people the possibility to live happily in the world.⁴⁷

Bozveliev remained firm, however, in his previous convictions. It was only during their second meeting that Bozveliev felt his convictions irrevocably shaken. According to Bozveliev, that second conversation forever “destroyed his inner calmness” and certainty. Gulapchev practiced proselytism using a peculiar combination of the Socratic “extracting method” and Lavrovian theory. The following dialogue functioned as the rite of initiation:

– *What are you reading?*

I told him.

– *And why do you read? What goal do you pursue through [reading]?*

This question seemed strange to me.

– I read for the same reason as all people read. I read in order to acquire knowledge, in order to develop a proper way of looking at things in the world.

– *And what is the use of this for society?*

I had never asked myself such a question before; I remained rather perplexed. After I gave it a bit of thought, I answered:

– The use of my reading is predominantly personal, for myself. But it seems to me that it can be of use for society, too, if it has amongst it an additional educated citizen, who understands and performs his duties well.

– *What do you understand to be the duties of an educated citizen in society? Isn't it so that he is obliged to return to society at least a part of that knowledge which he received; in other words, to work for the enlightenment in this society?*

– Everybody is obliged to give to society what he can.

– *Well then, but did you ever ask yourself: do all people in society have the possibility to study? Are they capable of listening and accepting what somebody would like to teach them? Take the workers, for example, that are working today for you [he implied the two workmen that were renovating my room]. When do they go to work?*

– During sunrise.

- *And when do they leave?*
- *After sunset.*
- *And when will they find the time to read and write? And the fatigue to which they are exposed every day? And the inconveniences at home? They are left with one day to rest in the week—what should they use it for in the first place? To rest, or for science?*

And Gulapchev once more emphasized the need for sweeping social reform, which would guarantee everybody enough bread, rest and enough spare time for intellectual development.⁴⁸

Bozveliev sensed “that the socialist critic of contemporary order had something fundamental, something just,” and decided to immerse himself in whatever socialist readings he could get his hands on. His first reading was Schöffles’ *Capitalism and Socialism*, later came Marx’s *Labor and Capital* and Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. The first socialist circle created in Kazanlūk in the late 1880s developed as a reading and self-educating society. Despite the fact that its purpose was limited to reading for enlightenment, the activities of the society had a predominantly conspirational character: a small and controlled circle of proselytes, nocturnal meetings in absolute secrecy, frequent change of meeting places and members registered under pseudonyms. As Bozveliev confirms, there were predominantly two reasons for these tactics. At the time socialism had not established itself ideologically in Bulgarian society and was often confused with various currents like anarchism and nihilism. However, the main reason was the influence of Russian revolutionaries, who he considered the first teachers of socialism in Bulgaria. “The model of Russian conspirational tactics was simply transported to Bulgaria.”⁴⁹

In contrast to the early Serbians and Greeks, the Bulgarian socialist intellectuals disposed of a local tradition that, in a certain way, facilitated their societal function. The intelligentsia which became the driving motor of the Bulgarian liberation struggle in the 1860s and 1870s provided also the raw model to which the early socialists would easily connect in the following decades. Gabrovski’s earlier allusion to the Liberation “apostles” was more than a mental concoction. In contrast to Greece and Serbia, where the liberation wars were exclusively the work of military leaders, in Bulgaria it had been the men of letters who took up arms, combining in one function the double role of

popular enlightenment intellectual and military man (L. Karavelov, H. Botev, V. Levski, G. Rakovski, etc.).⁵⁰ Most probably inspired by the Russian model and the general revolutionary atmosphere of the 1870s, they propagandized a dynamic mixture of Enlightenment thought, liberation ideology and social protest. It is open to discussion whether the Liberation intellectuals did not, in fact, “indigenize” the Russian model *à la Bulgare*. Their ideas, ranging from the radical republicanism of Karavelov to the radical socialism of Botev, furnished the national liberation ideology with strong socio-political connotations. The “liberation team” created a long-lasting and indisputable autochthonous legacy not only in the realm of ideas but also in the realm of practical models. “Botevism” inspired the first romantic, high-school attempts at belletristic self-expression for both Krüstiu Rakovski and Dimitŭr Blagoev. The activity of the liberation intellectuals established a powerful link between the intelligentsia and the base. Most importantly, there was direct biological continuity between the liberation intellectuals and the generation of Socialists who followed in the 1880s. Blagoev had been a contemporary of the 1876 uprising, while Krüstiu Rakovski was related to Georgi Rakovski. The Bulgarian Socialists thus would connect to this revolutionary tradition as they established their own pedigree of continuity. Blagoev, a key-figure in the development of Bulgarian socialism, noted in his memoirs:

As can be seen from the small notes from my life, as a youth I was educated in the nationalist spirit, yet this was not only nationalist but also revolutionary. By receiving the national idea from the Bulgarian agitators of the times, I also took on their revolutionary spirit ... And when I went to Russia, I had already well imbued the revolutionary May in me. The political and social relationships then, provided this May with the necessary conditions for it to mature and helped me to develop a clear revolutionary consciousness. Moreover, the political conditions and struggles in Bulgaria after the Liberation showed me very clearly the bankruptcy of that path to the realization of the national idea.⁵¹

The defense of the social content of the legacy left by the liberation “apostles” was to become Blagoev’s task upon his return from Russia. In *Nashite Apostoli* (Our apostles),⁵² an early text (1886) of his, Blagoev confronted one of the most prominent intellectual/liberation fighters remaining in Bulgaria: Zakharii Stoianov. Stoianov was one of the few

still to have an aura of proximity to the liberation war; he was the main historiographer of the 1876 uprising and a seminal figure in the development of the unionist movement in and for Eastern Rumelia. In *Nashite Apostoli* Blagoev contested the increasing appropriation of the legacy of the liberation by a nationalist fraction, as Stojanov and his associates discarded their early radical ideas for a more plain and overt nationalism. Blagoev emphasized the social dimension in the thought of Botev and Karavelov, establishing thus not only the pedigree of the socialist epigones as the rightful heirs of the liberation heroes, but also defining his version of the role and the function of the intellectual in society, relinking the autochthonous revolutionary with the socialist revolutionary tradition. *Nashite Apostoli* can be regarded also as a barometric text. Written only one year after the arrival of Blagoev in Bulgaria, it is indicative of the multifarious influences in his theoretical formation in the mid-1880s. The mentioning of Proudhon is explicit; the influence of Lavrov is implicit. The text contains prominent populist themes, including the connection of the intelligentsia with “the people” and the realization of social change “for and through the people.” It is also a text in which Blagoev explicitly denies the existence of classes in Bulgaria and stresses the “welfare of the people” as the goal of social change. It would indeed be another five years before the Marxian Blagoev of *Shto e sotsializъм* (1891) would appear.

[T]he basic characteristics of the *moral physiognomy of the revolutionaries*, which had an enormous *moral influence* on everything honest and lively, attracting it like magnets to their revolutionary banner. L. Karavelov, H. Botev, A. Kŭnchev, V. Levski are significant for us not only as political, that is, revolutionary figures or as the founders of a revolutionary party, which had to die along with them. *The principal and essential significance that they have for us is that they were the first representatives and founders of the Bulgarian revolutionary party*, which will continue the struggle for the broad revolutionary ideas, and for the realization of these social ideals, which they preached. These revolutionaries and the Bulgarian revolutionary party they founded on the premises of the struggle for the liberty and happiness of the Bulgarian people form part of the international revolutionary party. Today, there is no revolutionary party in Bulgaria. With the death of L. Karavelov the revolutionary party lost its last representative. But this does not mean that it is dead. Ideas do not die; and the ideas of L. Karavelov and H. Botev are such, that in contemporary times they move humanity.⁵³

Human affairs were arranged in such a way that without an intelligentsia a people [nation] would be unable to exist. A people without an intelligentsia to awaken it, to indicate action, to show the way towards salvation, are miserable ... Usually the simple people with their most elementary needs, satisfied through the basic means of existence, can endure [this condition] for whole centuries. For such a people, the intelligentsia is indispensable, as it is dedicated to the people's interests, ready to die for the [people's] awakening, freedom and happiness; the intelligentsia realizes that *the power is with the people*, that without them its own strength is nothing, and *that everything has to be gained by the people through their direct and immediate participation*. Intellectual heads—what our people call “studied heads”—are indispensable also for the simple, receptive, honest popular fighters. Take the uprising of our people. Who awakened our people, organized the revolutionary movement, and gave our dispersed *chetas*—each acting as it thought best, without plan and consequence—the character of a revolutionary organization? Was it not the “studied heads” of Karavelov and Botev?⁵⁴

4. Intellectuals and Political Systems

Models are conducive, but do not account for the total formative experience of intellectuals. The Russian model of the intelligentsia found application in some of the Balkan countries, partially for similar structural reasons to those in Russia, that is, the absence of solidified middle classes, and a long-standing intellectual tradition, as well as an answer to the broader problematic of modernization. It was also nurtured, however, by local political dynamics: the political system within which these intellectuals operated induced them either to accept or to discard their political environment, and consequently determined their pro- or anti-systemic attitudes. In the case of Bulgaria, the early setback to liberal expectations naturally radicalized educated cadres. Increased suppression and the curtailment of liberal rights under Stambolov in the 1890s, the complete derailment of the political system under the personal regime of King Ferdinand, and the explosion of the countryside by the turn of the century (see Chapter IV), delegitimized the political order in the eyes of intellectuals, who turned to ideologies of mass representation, particularly on the left. The imported Russian model was thus fortified by good local reasons, as political frustration and alienation led almost automatically to radicalization.

In the case of Serbia, a number of factors promoted the radicalization of socialist intellectuals: the willingness of the Liberals to compromise with the Crown and accept a setback in liberal demands, an incomplete constitutional arrangement, the Western-inspired modernization schemes proposed by King Milan and the ascendant group of the Progressives, the unwillingness of the aforementioned political groups to share power with the Radicals, and, the partial persecution of radical intellectuals. These radicalized socialist intellectuals, who not only rejected the status quo, but saw themselves called upon to save Serbia from the menace of Western, alias capitalistic, modernization (see Chapter III).

The political situation in Greece was quite different, which provides for an interesting contrast to the other two countries. In the

Greek case, it is rather the absence of radicalization of socialist intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that is of interest. It is precisely this absence of radicalization that accounts, to a great extent, for their failure to unite as a pressure group and their inability to promote socialism as a substantial political alternative (see Chapter V). The existence of a functional and representative political system since the 1860s deprived Greek socialist intellectuals of the major motivation for early socialist critique as we will encounter it in the Bulgarian and Serbian cases. Indeed it might be considered the predicament of socialism in conditions of “underdevelopment” that it received its initial entry ticket as an ideological alternative in these societies due to the priority of the political factor over the social. In the case of Greece, despite similar socio-economic conditions, the “integrative” character of the political system made radical political alternatives appear relatively redundant, while the Greek diaspora networks provided intellectuals with a broader geographical space as a “terrain of activity” and professional integration than their Bulgarian and Serbian colleagues.

Of course, a liberal political system was also in place in Romania, but it was rather the explosive agrarian situation in this country (big land ownership) that directly or indirectly motivated the early socialists/populists. Nineteenth-century Romania is perhaps the only case where we could argue for the primacy of the social factor over the political. The Romanian Socialists also naturally advanced demands of a political nature, like a more direct system of electoral and political representation, but in Romania, as in Greece, basic political liberties were guaranteed, and their respective political systems offered substantial protection of individual civil liberties. Moreover, the political systems in both countries achieved a high degree of stability in the nineteenth century. In the case of Greece, the political elites managed to effectively neutralize, in the process of the nineteenth century, the political influence of the Crown, reducing its constitutional dimensions and thus “stabilizing” the rules of the political game. Quite a different stabilization strategy was followed in the case of Romania. Here, stability was rather achieved through a tacit pact between the ruling elites (which were very different in their social composition than in Greece) and the Crown and their converging interests in maintaining the balance of the political system, which at the same time effectively secured their own control over politics. The reigns of both Carol I (1866–1914)

in Romania and George I (1863–1913) in Greece were characterized by constitutional stability. Keeping up with broader Balkan developments (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria), in both Greece and Romania this condition was reversed in the inter-war period, when the Crown abandoned its condition of incubation and developed into a weighty factor in the internal political scene. As already mentioned, the early socialists/populists in Romania mostly came from the Russified Bessarabian element. Neither the first leader of the Romanian Socialist Party, Dobrogeanu-Gherea (of Jewish descent from the province of Ekaterinoslav), nor the second, Krüstiū Rakovski (of Bulgarian descent from the Dobrudja), were of Romanian origin. Apparently, the border or contested regions of Romania produced more radical elements than Romania proper. This observation is conducive to the assumption that the Romanian peripheries were perhaps more radicalized than the center. It was a politicization related less to socio-economic than to political motives; it was stimulated either by political repression or by the strong centralizing attempts of the state and its attempts to subdue and homogenize the peripheries. This circumstance provides an interesting comparison to Greece, where regions like the Ionian Islands (incorporated into Greece in 1864), characterized by different intellectual, political and socio-economic traditions than mainland Greece, and multi-ethnic areas like Macedonia provided more radical elements than Greece proper. In fact, as we will witness in the Greek chapter, it was a Jewish labor organization in multi-ethnic Macedonia that was to lead to the unification of the Greek socialist movement. The minority status of nationalities like the Jews and the Armenians explains, to a great extent, their inclination towards radical ideologies.⁵⁵

5. Social Descent and Professional Integration

In the three countries under analysis (Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece), in the nineteenth century, the Serbian Radicals and the Bulgarian Socialists appear to display a *more egalitarian social structure*. The Radical intellectuals in Serbia, with negligible exceptions like Pera Todorović and Svetomir Nikolajević, were predominantly of modest social origins, not far removed from the social groups (peasants, artisans) that they claimed to represent. The founding father of Serbian radicalism, S. Marković, wrote in relation to this:

Fifty years ago in Serbia there were hardly any other classes but peasantry. We are all sons or grandsons of peasants. The educated people (and I am thinking of the truly educated, not the bookish intellectuals) that have come from that background are the educated democracy in the true sense of the word. Most of them grew up on *proja* [cornbread] and *skrob* [starch], and obtained their higher education thanks to the very people who remained on the *proja* and *skrob*, amongst whom there were many of their closest relatives. (While some of the intellectuals who made this same “career” seek to forget this, we are not willing to do so.)⁵⁶

Both S. Marković and N. Pašić, for example, were able to conduct their studies abroad by means of state-sponsored scholarships. The former’s critique of official Serbian politics cost him his scholarship. Notwithstanding the fact that the radical intellectuals could be officially classified as of “urban” descent, this categorization is misleading. Connections to the state class or the leading political elite, either by means of family affiliation or lineage, were negligible if not practically non-existent. The Radicals reversed this configuration upon their ascent to power in the 1890s, and transformed themselves successfully into the bearers of the state class.

Generally speaking, the picture in the Bulgarian setting appears to be similar. The case of Krūstiu Rakovski, who was descended from a wealthy landowning family from the Dobrudja, appears rather singular. On the whole, the Bulgarian Socialists’ backgrounds varied from the

small merchant milieu to more modest classes. Intellectuals like Blagoev or Bozveliev came from very modest backgrounds and may properly be classified as self-made men. The first went through a small “odyssey” of extreme poverty in order to self-finance his studies in Russia; the second received training as an apprentice and had no formal academic education whatsoever. Even an intellectual like Nikola Gabrovski, who hailed from the small merchant milieu, found himself in extreme financial difficulties upon the death of his father, a circumstance that seriously endangered his studies in Switzerland. Apparently, none of the Bulgarian intellectuals who turned to socialism belonged to the state-sponsored intelligentsia (recipients of state stipends). On the contrary, according to the testimony of S. Nokov, Bulgarian state-sponsored students in Geneva acquiesced in official politics—in this case, the Stambolov regime.⁵⁷ Finally, it is worth emphasizing that socialist intellectuals in Bulgaria were integrated professionally almost exclusively in the teaching profession. Gulapchev, Blagoev, Gabrovski, Sakūzov, Bakalov, Dabev, Nokov, etc., were all high-school teachers, before some of them rose to the rank of “professional” socialists. Bulgarian socialist intellectuals therefore found professional integration at the lowest level of the state mechanism, in the educational sector, a circumstance that also provided them with a certain room for maneuver. Apparently, while the civil-service sector was saturated by the 1900s, a shortage of teaching stuff meant that school instruction was still an open vocation for non-conformist university graduates.⁵⁸ The teaching profession had been a traditional locus of integration for radically oriented intellectuals since the liberation period (1870s). The circumstances by which the Bulgarian socialists won control of this essential vein in the reproduction of the state system gave rise to two significant consequences: in the first place, the continuity in the recruitment of socialist cadres, a chain clearly linking teachers and pupils;⁵⁹ and in the second, the diffusion mechanisms of socialism via the educational system. In fact, the educational sector would remain a stronghold of radical thought in Bulgaria, not only at the secondary but also at university level. The teaching profession was one of the strongholds of radicalism in Serbia as well. There, the “second-rank officers” of the Radical Party were largely high-school teachers, particularly those of “local production.”⁶⁰

A somewhat different picture emerges in the case of Greece. Intellectuals with socialist inclinations appear to have originated largely from

the socially ascending strata, associated with the liberal professions, commercial activities and the state mechanism. In few cases there were family connections to sources of authority and the state class. Greek socialist intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not seek professional integration in the educational sector, showing preference for the liberal professions, free-lance journalism or engagement in purely literary activities. As will be argued in the Greek chapter, Greek socialist intellectuals demonstrate features of a greater degree of urbanization and ideological “bourgeoisisation” and seem to have sought professional integration either at higher levels of the state mechanism or in traditional power networks. This social picture, in conjunction with the lack of incentives for a clear break with the political establishment, more or less sealed the fortunes of socialism in Greece as an intellectuals’ movement until the second decade of the twentieth century. It also goes to explain the Greek socialist intellectuals’ lack of political radicalization. This picture changed around the 1920s, and progressively in the inter-war period, when indeed socialism managed to connect to the lower echelons of the educational system and in the Greek case was also disseminated through intellectuals/teachers.

The educational vocation of socialist intellectuals in the three countries under examination during the nineteenth century tends to confirm the abovementioned trends. The Serbian and Bulgarian socialist intellectuals demonstrate altogether a somewhat greater inclination for the more practically oriented disciplines than their colleagues in Greece. Their choices (Serbia and Bulgaria) show greater variation and include law, which featured prominently in most Balkan countries, but also engineering, the natural sciences, and medicine. In Greece the configuration is reversed; there is an overwhelming emphasis on law and letters and a much smaller predilection for practical/liberal professions. The hard-core sciences are completely absent. This rather general picture also corresponds to the broader trends of the institutionalized educational systems in the three countries. Vocational training was neglected in all Balkan countries, which laid a far greater emphasis on academic training as a means of reproducing their elites. However, vocational training was institutionalized earlier in Serbia and Bulgaria than in Greece, where a classically oriented education was deemed best suited to measure up to the antique legacy of the country. In Serbia vocational training was institutionalized around the second half of the

nineteenth century, with the creation of a commercial school (1845), an engineering school (1846), an artillery school (1850) and an agrarian school (1853): institutions that despite their limited impact started to bare fruit around the 1870s.⁶¹ Bulgaria had created institutionalized schools of professional training by the end of the century. It consisted of an industrial training school in Knjaževo, a model agricultural school in Sadovo, a state viticultural institute, etc. Considering the belated institutionalization of the Bulgarian state, schools of practical orientation were created in the first twenty years of the country's existence. That vocational training should not be underestimated is testified by the fact that the majority of the leaders of the Bulgarian agrarian movement had passed through the Bulgarian agrarian academies. The situation was quite different in Greece, where higher education of practical orientation was institutionalized rather late. A polytechnic school was founded in 1887 and began to have an impact around 1914. A school of commercial and industrial studies was founded in 1894, while the first agrarian academy was founded in 1920.⁶² It was only after the creation of an agrarian academy that the country witnessed the rise of a generation of agronomists that had a greater political engagement with the fortunes of the countryside. Finally, again in contrast to Greece, in the nineteenth century the Serbian and the Bulgarian states inaugurated the institution of state scholarships for studies abroad, obviously with the purpose of "engineering" a certain quota of specialized personnel. Progressively, in those countries the scale shifted more towards private sponsorship. State scholarships for studies abroad were not institutionalized in Greece until well into the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 Höpken, "Zwischen Bürokratie und Bürgertum," 97–103.
- 2 Daskalov and Sundhaussen, "Modernisierungsansätze" in Hatschikjan and Troebst, eds., *Südosteuropa*, 114–117.
- 3 Black, E. Cyril, "Russia and the Modernization of the Balkans" in Jelavich, C. and B., eds., *The Balkans in Transition*, 147.
- 4 In their eagerness to stress the Marxist character of their socialist movements, both the Bulgarian and Romanian communist historiographies have purposely downplayed, in fact ignored, the early populist influences. Different altogether is the historiographical situation in Serbia, where the

institutionalization of the populist movement into the Radical Party has received abundant attention and has moreover led to the creation of different historical schools.

- 5 See: Haupt, Georges, "Model Party." The German influence was two-fold. While the SPD served as the prime model of a successful, mass socialist party, the German industrial "miracle" functioned as a raw model for quick and successful industrialization.
- 6 Black, "Russia and the Modernization of the Balkans," 155.
- 7 Marković participated in the "Smorgon Academy" formed in 1867. Its members lived communally and earned their living through teaching and writing. Women were granted full membership. The teachings of Chernyshevsky had a great impact on the circle. See: McClellan, *Svetozar Marković*, 55–63. Dimităr Blagoev describes his experience in the Russian communes as the most formative period in his life. "They helped also with respect to intellectual [issues] to find that sense in life that I had in vain searched as an adolescent in Bulgaria, for thanks to those groups I could properly ask the question with which I had plagued my elder colleagues and myself at the Gabrovo gymnasium, namely, why is it valuable to know, to read? Now it was transformed into a more principled and more profound question, as follows: what is the sense of life, or why is it worth living? It seemed like the history of the Russian revolutionary movement could provide me with an answer to this question." Blagoev, Dimităr, *Kratki belezhki*, 57. Blagoev not only formed his revolutionary ethos among the Russian student communes, his own political group in Petersburg literally grew out of such a commune.
- 8 On the Russian student colony in Zurich, see: Meijer, *Knowledge and Revolution*.
- 9 Trgovčević, "Influenze esterne," 647.
- 10 Skoric, "The Populism of Nikola Pašić," 469–485; Shemjakin, "Nikola Pašić i ruskie socialistii," 5–40.
- 11 Schmidt, *Populismus oder Marxismus*, 30–41.
- 12 Bogdanović, "Srpska socijaldemokratska partija i seljaštvo," 111ff.
- 13 Gella, "An introduction to the Sociology of the Intelligentsia" in Gella, ed., *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals*, 10.
- 14 Ibid., 8.
- 15 Ibid., 15.
- 16 Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, 9.
- 17 It is worth mentioning that we not only miss a confrontation of socialism with the institution of the church, but in cases like the example of the Serbian Radicals, we witness a strong radicals' following among the lower clergy. This may be explained through the contents of radicalism, perpetrating ideas like equality in poverty, a plebian democratic, egalitarian, chiliastic and collectivistic social vision. The "ideological syncretism" mentioned could be attributed to a variety of factors; the deficient separation between state and church, the slow process of secularization, the relationship be-

tween religion and popular culture. Relevant is also the equivalent absence of a religiously affiliated syndicalist movement. In contrast again to the experience won in a great part of Western Europe, the Orthodox Church did not function as a secular forum either for the political or the corporatist organization of the working class.

- 18 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti 19. veka*, vol III, 29ff.
- 19 Pereira, *The Thought and Teachings of N. G. Černyševskij*, 77.
- 20 Chernyshevsky, *What Is To Be Done?*
- 21 Ibid., 231–232 (emphasis mine).
- 22 Ibid., 344 (emphasis mine).
- 23 Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 197.
- 24 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 31–32.
- 25 Scanlan, P. J., introduction to the *Historical Letters* in Lavrov, *Historical Letters*, 29–30.
- 26 Ibid., 26.
- 27 ibid., 27.
- 28 Walicki, *A History*, 244.
- 29 Lavrov, *Historical Letters*, 111.
- 30 Ibid., 135.
- 31 Ibid., 139–140 (emphasis in the original).
- 32 Meijer, *Knowledge and Revolution*, 118.
- 33 Ibid., 120.
- 34 Lavrov, *Historical Letters*, 157.
- 35 Ibid., 161 (emphasis in the original).
- 36 Ibid., 172.
- 37 Ibid., 176.
- 38 Ibid., 272.
- 39 ibid., 329 (emphasis in the original).
- 40 Jovanović, *Pera Todorović in Sabrana dela*, vol. 2, 218–219. The theme of eagerness to delve into political activity is to be observed also in the case of S. Marković, who claimed that longer sojourn in the student status “would blunt his political acumen and leave him but a Don Quixote on the fringes of society.” McClellan, *Svetozar Marković*, 72. The phenomenon of incomplete academic studies is valid also for the case of the Bulgarian Socialists. With few exceptions like N. Gabrovski and K. Rakovski, a great many of the early socialists attended their studies, but did not complete the university diploma (Blagoev, Sakuzov, Kirkov, etc.).
- 41 Todorović, *Krvava godina*, 113.
- 42 Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, part II in *Sabrana dela*, vol. 5, 125–126.
- 43 Gabrovski, *Nravstvennata zadacha na inteligentsiata*.
- 44 Ibid., 7–8.
- 45 Ibid., 17–18 (emphasis mine).
- 46 Ibid., 22–23.
- 47 Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 28.

48 Ibid., 29–30 (emphasis mine).

49 Ibid., 32.

50 Taking the Bulgarian revival intelligentsia as a starting point, Roumen Daskalov, has applied the term “intelligentsia” rather broadly to denote generally revival and enlightenment intellectual activity in the Balkans. I tend to disagree with this holistic application of the term. Moreover, the model of the militant intellectual or the combination intellectual/military leader is not applicable to all Balkan cases, but rather a particularity of some cases, and is, for example, completely missing from the Greek and Serbian liberation legacy. Greek intellectuals promoting Enlightenment thought understood themselves as an intellectual avant-guard and contested the ecclesiastic monopoly over education and knowledge but did not understand themselves as revolutionaries. Equally, the conspirational activities of the Philikē Etairia were fashioned rather after the model of the Italian Carbonari, and while driven by liberation ideology, followed rather a predominantly military rationale but had little or nothing to do with education or with the enlightenment of the people. See: Daskalov, “Transformations of the East European Intelligentsia,” 46–84, particularly 61. The significant difference lies in the timing, when these diverse groups came into being and developed their activity. Particular to the Bulgarian revival is that it followed after the Tanzimat reforms of which it made abundant usage. Capitalizing on the possibilities for the expansion of education, this period will witness also the proliferation of the teacher’s profession in Bulgaria, the group that constituted also the most prevalent group of the Bulgarian revival. The standard work on the topic: Meininger, *The Formation of a nationalist Bulgarian Intelligentsia*.

51 Blagoev, *Kratki belezhki*, 140.

52 Blagoev, “Nashite apostoli” in *Süchineniia*, vol.1, 208–230.

53 Ibid., 227 (emphasis mine).

54 *ibid.*, 229–230 (emphasis mine).

55 On the Armenians see: Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*.

56 Quoted in Skoric, “The Populism of Nikola Pašić,” 483; see also: Perović, “Introduction” to Todorović, *Krvava godina*, 31.

57 Nokov, “Studentski spomeni,” 81–103.

58 Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878–1918*, 214.

59 It is not difficult to follow the genealogy of the Bulgarian Socialists by reconstructing consecutive generations of teachers and pupils. Eftim Dabev was the teacher of Krüstiü Rakovski, Slavi Balabanov, and Stojan Nokov in Gabrovo. N. Gabrovski was the teacher of Georgi Balabanov in Plovdiv. Spiro Gulapchev was the mentor of S. Balabanov, etc. Calculating the times these teachers were fired, forced to move or change educational institution (two to three times each), the map of their geographical mobility covers more or less the whole of Bulgaria. Gulapchev taught in Tŭrnovo, Gabrovo and Ruse. Gabrovski in Sliven and Plovdiv. Blagoev in Shumen,

Vidin and Plovdiv, where he was also director of the local gymnasium. He also sojourned while jobless in Tŭrnovo. Sakŭzov taught in Shumen, Dabev in Sevlievo and Gabrovo. Nokov in Kotel and G. Bakalov in Sliven. Several of the Socialists/intellectuals/teachers periodically lost their employment due to their political credo, while in periods of outright political repression like the Stambolovchina, short-term imprisonment or banishment were not uncommon. The participation of pupils supplements the picture from the other end. Blagoev launched his first periodical, the *Sŭvremeniŭ Pokazatel* with the help of his pupils in the Sofia gymnasium. In January 1888 the pupils of the Gabrovo gymnasium rebelled against new regulations prohibiting student associations and demanded that the school library be returned to their control. Eighty pupils were expelled. In February 1891 the Plovdiv gymnasium rebelled and was temporarily closed down. Slavi Balabanov and Krŭstiu Rakovski were expelled two times from their respective gymnasiums. While the first time the penalty was relaxed, the second time they were deprived of access to all schools in the kingdom. The Gabrovo gymnasium was renowned for its progressive and radical orientation. A series of Russia-educated teachers left their mark there, such as Dabev and Gulapchev, also Botev's friend, Smilov. Nokov remembers that the students' readings consisted of Chernyshevsky, Dobroljubov, Pisarev, Belinski, Turgenev, Gogol, Pushkin and Shelgunov. Lack of local textbooks, particularly in the natural sciences, was supplemented with teaching materials coming directly from Russia. Nokov, "Spomeni," 82. Student fundraising enabled Dabev to bring the first Marxist book ever printed in Bulgaria—Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*—to the printing press. Balabanov and Rakovski translated as pupils Malatesta's "Discourse between two Paupers," while Balabanov and Bakalov did a first rudimentary printing of Kropotkin's "To the Youth."

60 Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića I*. in *Sabrana Dela*, 107.

61 Trgovčević, "Influenze esterne," 642.

62 Tsoukalas, *Exartēsē kai anaparagōgē*, 442.

1. Some Notes on the Historiography

Indeed, it has been the ideological mutation of the later Radicals that is the hottest issue in the historiographical debate as to the “true” character of the Radical Party and its potential classification within an orthodox typology of political parties. While there is more or less broad consent with respect to the initial Narodnik matrix, as epitomized in the thought of Svetozar Marković, the founding father of the radical movement, serious dissent prevails on the issue of the continuity of his legacy. What was the “true” character of the party that managed to curb the autocratic pretensions of the Serbian Crown and was instrumental in the establishment of a proper constitutional system in Serbia? Was the Radicals’ persistent struggle for the extension of constitutional rights a reflection of their commitment to the rule of law or was it the necessary instrument of their own hegemonic project? Are all these seemingly contradictory roles part of a planned, intentionally manipulative design, or do they also belong to the realm of historical dialectics, whereby political organisms do not develop as simple incarnations of doctrines, but in negotiation with the forces *des choses*? What was the driving philosophy of the party that managed to mobilize the peasantry, move the masses and create a very modern and effective political machinery unprecedented not only in Serbian, but also Balkan, standards? What kind of political formation does the Radical Party represent: a *mettre en scène* of Marković’s initial radical project, or a departure from the original radical design, and if this is the case, then to what degree and in what modality relative to the teachings of the master?

One historical school, represented most prominently by M. Protić, views the 1880s as a watershed, the moment marking the abandonment of the initial populist doctrine and a major reorientation of the Radicals towards Western influences, predominantly French radicalism and English constitutionalism. The principal contention of this position is that the Radicals developed along the lines of a classic “bourgeois” political party. The emphasis is laid on a comparison of political programs and, above all, on the pretensions of the Radicals to constitutional and

parliamentary legality. The weakness of this position is its incapacity to precisely trace and consequently confirm the channels through which these influences entered the Radical doctrine. Moreover, the notion of constitutionalism—taken as an *a priori* indicator, which would allow for a clear categorization within the realm of the history of political ideas—is not examined in relation to the ideological credo and the social and political philosophy of the Radicals.⁴

A second school, represented eminently by L. Perović and A. L. Shemjakin, emphasizes the originality of the Radical Party and conceptualizes its development until the 1890s within the broad parameters of populist/socialist ideology. This historiographical school, although acknowledging the procedural distancing of the Radicals from the original theoretical sources, also stresses non-negligible aspects of continuity, regarding Serbian radicalism more as a movement in the making than as the final product of a precise ideological scheme. Its contenders make a point of arguing against a hasty and uncritical reading of the evolution of the Radical Party, whereby its final form is projected retrospectively on its beginnings. From their standpoint, ideological mutation and dissent do not necessarily signify a betrayal of origins, but are viewed procedurally as part of the Radicals' sense of political pragmatism. They are the outcome of the Radicals' negotiation with the possibilities and the limitations of their environment as part and parcel of concrete political practice, and most emphatically, they are the result of power politics, a process whereby ideological elements are dropped, added, totalized or modified.⁵

It is not, however, only the radical legacy as such that is the bone of historiographical contention. Even more debated is the role the radical tradition played in the history of the evolution of socialism in Serbia. Here again, consensus more or less rules as to the primary significance of the founding figure of Svetozar Marković, but dissent prevails with respect to the narrative of continuity or discontinuity of the socialist legacy. As is to be expected, the debate is intricately linked to the assumptions emanating from the two above-mentioned schools. If, as an institutionalized party, the Radicals forsook their socialist origins and developed into a bourgeois political formation, then the logical conclusion can only be discontinuity. This position focuses on dissident socialist figures, that is, those who at one time collaborated with or formed part of the radical movement, but then distanced

themselves from it, turning into the Radicals' fiercest critics, while self-fashioning themselves as the authentic progeny of the Marković tradition, notably socialist figures like Mita Cenić and Dragiša Stanojević.⁶ What is interesting about this alternative, narrowly conceived socialist platform is not only its incapacity to seriously challenge the radical hegemony, but also its short-lived character. According to this same position, "orthodox" socialism continues in the cases of solitary figures like Vasa Pelagić, to be properly reborn with the establishment of the social-democratic paradigm (with the institutionalization of the Social Democratic Party in 1903). Schematically speaking, after the meteoric appearance of Marković's socialism and the peripatetic activity of some of his "orthodox" disciples, socialism in Serbia was extinguished and was later recalled to life by the Social Democrats. This lineage more or less maintains a theory of a quasi post-Marković, pre-social-democrat vacuum characterized by clear-cut ideological demarcations.

However, there are good reasons to consider a much more fluid picture of the passage from the populist peasantry of the Radicals (which was not an authentic peasant party as in the Bulgarian case, but a populist party with pretensions to speak in the name of the peasants) to urban socialism, the principle of class struggle and the unconditional acceptance of the inevitability of capitalistic development advocated by the Social Democrats. A number of indications suggest a far more complicated and fluid picture with respect to the pedigree of socialist ideas in Serbia: the appearance of the Independent Radicals (who, emerging in 1901, were institutionalized as a party 1904) as an offshoot and as a critic of the Old Radicals, their criticism of the Old Radicals—at least in their initial phase—from the standpoint of radical orthodoxy, their endorsement of a reformatory social policy with pretensions to a middle space between urban and rural, their competition with the Social Democrats for a similar electoral pool and, finally, the ease of the integration of some of the early protagonists of the social democratic movement with inclinations to reformist socialism into the Independent Radicals (Kosta Jovanović, Jovan Skerlić). It is noteworthy that in the 1890s a later prominent Social Democrat like Dragiša Lapčević was an adherent of populist socialism, before his "conversion" to social democracy. Are such instances indicative of the "revolutionary" connotations associated with radicalism as an ideology, even if radicalism in practice and power (from 1890s onwards) would develop as a quasi antithesis to

the initial doctrine? It is further indicative, perhaps, that the 1890s saw repeated efforts by socialists of various colors to bring a socialist party into being. Failure to consolidate and unite in several cases (Živojin Balugdžić, Milošević, Prodanović and others) meant a passage to the Radical camp. It is indicative that this “leakage” was taking place at the expense of the Socialists and to the benefit of the Radicals.⁷

Altogether, the 1890s represent a colorful and convolute period in the development of socialism in Serbia. As in Bulgaria (in the 1880s and early 1890s) it signals the slow passage from one paradigm into another. The interim period is characterized by eclecticism and the ideological confines between theoretical radicalism (populism) and, to a certain extent, even institutionalized radicalism and early social democracy (Marxism) are fluid and transgressive. The Independent Radicals could be regarded both as an expression of this transition and a crystallization of the same process. Though targeting the traditional electoral pool of the Radicals, they also bid for the middle ground between a majoritarian peasantry and a minoritarian working class, opting for reform and social legislation as the means to control the exigencies of an emergent capitalism that had not yet created a numerically sufficient army. Taking all the above into consideration, it seems pertinent to return to the initial question concerning the classification of the radical doctrine as an ideological matrix. As emphasized by L. Perović, radicalism is not a substitute for the concept of socialism.⁸ Radicalism was the original and successful adaptation of populist socialism in the Serbian context. In the process of ascending to the political peak, the Radical Party would evolve from theoretical populism, as a timely socialist answer to the issue of modernization, to a more demagogical populism as a means of consolidating political gains already achieved, and of conserving its hegemonic and organic alliance with the *populus*. Developing from an oppositional activist movement contesting authority into the embodiment of political authority, the Radicals “settled down.” With the quasi “mathematical logic” that emanates from the dynamics of power, the Radicals were transformed from a force of change into a preserving force. Moreover, the social dimension of their doctrine was unconditionally subjugated to the dictum of a powerful nationalism. Even in its later phase, however, the Radical Party continued to nourish its image from its early revolutionary/anti-conformist legacy, despite having in practice abandoned the greater part of its revolutionary baggage.

2. The Ideological Roots of Serbian Socialism

As conceived by its founder, Svetozar Marković, radicalism was an original synthesis of multiple theoretical socialist influences both of the Eastern and the Western variety. Acknowledging the concrete conditions in their homeland—which was a predominantly agrarian country with weakly developed capitalism, but increasingly exposed to the vicissitudes of the international market and commercial capitalism—the Radicals incorporated the elements that they deemed fit to address their local specificity. The early Radicals were exposed to a variety of theoretical influences such as pre-Marxist French and German socialism (Blanc, Lassalle),⁹ but also those of Marx, from whom, just as their Russian colleagues, they borrowed not his materialistic philosophy of history, but his vivid description of the horrors of capitalistic development and an analysis driven by economic determinism. Moreover, Marxism, as imported through German channels, would influence the analysis of later Radicals like Lasar Paču, less in the Russian traditional and more in the spirit of Western European social democracy. It was, however, Russian populism (*Narodničestvo*) that undeniably exercised the strongest influence on the early Radicals, and that may be viewed as the core constitutive doctrine of Serbian radical movement.¹⁰ Flourishing in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s, but still very much alive in the 1880s up until the end of the century,¹¹ Populism was a broad current of thought, encompassing a variety of theoretical positions with a common denominator: how to deal with the predicament of modernization and how to prevent the negative social impacts of capitalism in Russia. In other words, how to avoid the horrors of primitive accumulation and the high social price of industrial development. The philosophical premises of Russian populism run counter to a notion of history as a teleologically conceived historical necessity, which as a linear process was the fulfillment of allegedly objective, “iron” historical laws. It was precisely this philosophical standpoint that allowed the Russian Populists to conceive of development as a process of contingency and its materialization as the terrain of human intervention.

Populism represented not only an

ideological reaction to the development of capitalism *inside Russia*—it was a reaction to the capitalist economy and socialist thought of the West. It reflected not only the problems of small producers in confrontation with large-scale capitalist production; it reflected also specific problems of a backward peasant country in confrontation with highly developed capitalistic states. It was a Russian reaction to Western capitalism and, also, a Russian response to Western socialism—a reaction to Western capitalism and Western socialism by a democratic intelligentsia in a backward peasant country at an early age of capitalistic development.¹²

Irrespective of the specificity of the Russian case, A. Walicki proposes an even broader perspective, which allows us to view “Russian populism as a particular variant of an ideological pattern, which emerges in different backward societies in periods of transition and reflects the characteristic class position of the peasantry.” It is not, however, a “*direct* expression of peasant ideology,” but rather “an ideology formulated by a democratic intelligentsia who in backward countries, lacking a strong bourgeois class structure, enjoy as a rule greater social authority and play a more important role in national life than intellectuals in the economically more developed states.”¹³ The imbroglio of the painful and extended transitional period is stressed also by L. Perović, who suggests that it is precisely the long lingering in an in-between condition that leads to theoretical concoctions envisioning a leaping ahead in social development, whereby “backwardness in reality is compensated through radicalism in ideas and political action.” The desideratum is a short cut to “progress” and the solution is found in political revolution. In order to escape capitalism, Russia would rely on its indigenous institutions of communal ownership and thus achieve the stage the Western socialist theories were proclaiming. “The goal is the take over of state power and the realization of the social revolution through the state. It is the kind of left-wing ideology that develops in agrarian countries with the wish to accelerate the course of history through revolutionary will. At the same time, already from the beginning and due to the weakness of the bourgeoisie, this same ideology becomes a factor of long-lasting petrification in society.”¹⁴ The envisioned leaping-ahead formula is a national answer to the problem of modernization and has a strongly compensatory character. It was the articulation of intellectuals in agrarian countries who inherited the socialist teachings of Western Europe with-

out regard for the social dynamics that gave rise to these same teachings. "It is in essence a modification of European socialist teachings, stemming from industrial countries containing populations united in a national state, but divided socially; and it is the manifestation of the adaptation of these teachings in conditions of economically underdeveloped, socially undifferentiated and politically divided people."¹⁵

The quintessence of classical populist doctrine was based on the idea of the possibility of a forward leap in social evolution, skipping over the capitalistic phase of development, envisioning thus a short cut to socialism. From the 1840s, Herzen, in his critique of Western bourgeois society and his conviction of the non-necessity for Russia to follow the same path, launched the idea of an original Russian way to socialism. Having started his intellectual career as a Westernizer, Herzen, disappointed with the outcome of the 1848 revolutions in the West, the defeat of socialism and the renewed victory of the bourgeoisie, relinquished his exclusively pro-Western standpoint, coming to regard the East, that is the Slavic countries including Russia, as the last hope of mankind, providing thus a theoretical bridge between Westernizers and slavophiles. His Russian socialism shared with the slavophiles a faith in the potential of the village commune to function as the nucleus of a new form of social organization. His faith was derived from a voluntaristic philosophy of history, which enabled Herzen to reject the Westernizers' conviction that Russia must experience the same historical evolution as had Western societies before it. Herzen shared with the later populists an abhorrence of bourgeois society, and aspired to a direct transition to socialism via the peasant commune. However, Herzen's "Russian Socialism" had little to do with classical populism. His critique of bourgeois society did not stem from an opposition to capitalism as an economic formation (capitalism as the expropriation and proletarianization of the masses), but rather as a "socio-cultural phenomenon," as a "symptom of the final decay of the decrepit 'old world.'"¹⁶ Herzen argued for a fundamental difference between a naturalistic and a sociological conception of man, which was manifested in the expression of free will. In contrast to the physiological self, the sociological, so Herzen argued, postulates the existence of consciousness, and this in itself presupposes a sense of freedom. The idea of freedom, therefore, must be understood as the "phenomenological necessity of human reason, as a psychological reality." Against interpretations pos-

tulating inevitability, Herzen's interpretation of the problem of freedom and necessity had great appeal for the majority of Russian Socialists and would be the foundation for the later "subjective method" developed by Lavrov and Mikhailovski.¹⁷

This line of thought was carried further by N. G. Chernyshevsky, who advocated the possibility of skipping phases of development in social evolution by leaning on the principle of collective property as preserved in the Russian patriarchal collectivity—the *Obština*. Although the issue of non-capitalist development had been raised before, by Herzen, Chernyshevsky was the first to formulate a "general theory of accelerated social change based on non-capitalist methods." According to Chernyshevsky, social change was accelerated through cultural contact between people in different phases of social development; more precisely, through interaction between more developed and less developed groups. Intermediate stages of this accelerating process existed theoretically but had little practical significance. The evolution of ownership proceeded in stages, from primitive communal property, via private ownership to modern communal ownership by associations as proclaimed by socialist theory. This last phase was to replace capitalistic property relations in developed countries. Russia found itself in the first phase of the universal development of mankind, and since a direct transition to the third phase did not seem unlikely, there was no reason to abolish the village commune and destroy the Russian people's collectivist traditions. The effort should rather be directed in the opposite direction: to modernize the commune and transform it "along rational lines into an association similar to the worker's associations existing in Western Europe."¹⁸ Although generally subsumed within the populist movement, due to his defense of the peasant commune and his advocacy of non-capitalistic development, Chernyshevsky differed significantly from the later Populists. "Whereas Mikhailovski thought of the commune as the embryo of a new civilization that would be both different from and qualitatively superior to capitalism, Chernyshevsky felt that the commune represented an evolutionary stage incompatibly lower than capitalist property relations. The essential difference was that Chernyshevsky hoped Russia would be able to *catch up* with Western Europe by building on the latter's achievements and that she would overtake her and become a model for others ..."¹⁹ Whereas the populists of the 1870s prescribed Russia with a very different path

from Western Europe, Chernyshevsky insisted on the Westernization of Russia and the extirpation of "Asiatic" conditions and habits.²⁰ For the populists, who developed their ideas after the land reform in Russia, the problem was no longer the liberation of the peasantry, but the prospect of the capitalistic expropriation of small producers. They consequently idealized Russian backwardness and looked for a separate, native path of development.²¹ Populist theory declared the hegemony of the masses over the educated elite, and emphatically jettisoned the idea of imposing Western socialism as a form of abstract intellectualism upon the peasants.

As already mentioned, crucial for the development of populist doctrine proper was the non-Marxist reception of Marxism in Russia. In the eyes of the Russian Populists, capitalistic development did not represent progress as in orthodox Marxism, but rather a regressive process urgently to be avoided. The passage from the 1860s to the 1870s also marked a shift in emphasis in populist ideology from "anti-feudal democratic radicalism to ... anti-capitalistic agrarian socialism." This found its most romantic and emphatic articulation in Mikhailovski's theory of progress "which idealized the primitive peasant economy by setting a high value on its autarky and its independence from the capitalist market." Deeply indebted to Marxism and consciously grappling with deterministic conclusions at the same time, the Russian Populists strove for an original way of development, which found its most poignant articulation in the thesis of the privilege of backwardness. As phrased by Vorontsov: "The countries which are latecomers to the arena of history have a great privilege in comparison with older countries, a privilege consisting in the fact that the accumulated historical experience of their countries enables them to work out a relatively true image of their own next step and to strive for what the others have already achieved not instinctively but consciously, not groping in the dark but knowing what should be avoided in the way."²²

3. Modernization and Its Antecedents

The Radicals' response to modernization cannot be considered independently from the commensurate attempts of their predecessors and contemporaries. The radical reply was partially inspired, and to a great extent was spurred, as a reaction to the modernizing visions and efforts of the political elite en place. In the second half of the nineteenth century the political landscape was just starting to take shape, and it was precisely this period that was to witness the major struggle for the locus of sovereignty in Serbia from the preeminent claim of the prince to be the prime and sole political authority in the country to the rise and eventual institutionalization of various political groupings claiming authority and legitimacy in the name of a constitutional arrangement. Chronologically, the Liberals constituted the first Serbian political elite (1860s) to embark on a modernization course modeled on Western European concepts, including the notions of political and economic freedom, national liberation and unification, and the demand for a constitutional parliamentary monarchy. The Liberals were instrumental in putting together an ideology of liberal nationalism prescribing representative government—at least in theory—as the authentic expression of the sovereign people, and were the first elite to introduce a programmatic political platform, informed by ideas rather than personalities.²³

In their effort to validate their program they resorted to the past, to a theory of history that would allow for the legitimization of their modernizing project as evolving naturally out of the Serbian past. Wishing to limit the prerogatives of the Crown, and aiming at the introduction of a constitutional political system, the Liberals were keen to demonstrate that the “primordial Serbian spirit was essentially liberal.”²⁴ As is often the case with newly introduced modernizing designs, the more radical the rupture with tradition in practice, the more urgent the need to resort to a historical model that can justify and legitimize adequately the needs of the present via past experience; so too was the case with the Serbian Liberals.²⁵ What would appear to be a contradiction is only a seeming paradox; a forceful appeal is made to the past only in order

to break with it.²⁶ Aiming at a synthesis between tradition and modernity, the Liberals presented their modernizing attempt as a natural revival of traditional Serbian political institutions, which, suppressed in the past, needed only be re-established as part of the inherent democratic heritage of the Serbian people. “Backward” as Serbia might have been, went the liberal argument, the “Serbs were uniquely suited by their history to become constitutional democrats.”²⁷ As a consequence of this national romanticism, the Liberals were the first to draw attention to the traditional Serbian institutions (communal self-government, *zadruga*, etc.) as core moral and ethical properties of the Serbs, but did not consider them a viable foundation for further development either in political or in economic terms. The Liberals envisioned a Serbian state advancing along the lines of modern European civilization, whereby constitutionalism and representative government were to guarantee political and economic progress. In terms of constitutional reform, the liberal project envisioned the curtailment of the prince’s authority by means of a national legislature, and despite the fact that both the St Andrew *Skupština* (parliament) of 1858 and the 1869 constitution did not have the desired far-reaching effects of the original liberal design, these nevertheless introduced the idea of political diversity, established the *Skupština* as a regular body, regularizing elections and formalizing the cabinet system.²⁸

While identifying and legitimizing their political program as the will of the nation, the Liberals made no serious effort either to mobilize the population or involve it in the decision-making process. Having experienced persecution in the 1860s, the Liberals were convinced that they had demonstrated, beyond further obligation, their devotion to the people’s cause. Rather, once in power, they tended to rely on the mechanics of the bureaucratic state to ensure the continuity of their rule, partially restricting civic freedoms and outmaneuvering the opposition. As successful as the Liberals may have been in the cultural sphere—they created the *Ujedinjena Omladina Srpska* (United Serbian Youth), a youth organization promoting the cooperation of all Serbs from the kingdom and the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires—they did not cash this in for increased influence in the political sphere. It was, however, to their credit that a modern political system was established in Serbia, and they were instrumental in transforming the political discourse by elevating the nation and its welfare to the supreme justificatory crite-

tion of Serbian politics.²⁹ The Liberals were instrumental in enforcing the principle that power should be exercised on behalf of the people, and they set an example soon to be followed by other political elites.

The inconsistent policy of the Liberals (in promoting civil liberties while suppressing them at the same time), their unrealistic “metaphysical” treatment of the national question, disappointment with the 1869 constitution, which delegated the *Skupština* the right to approve legislation but still reserved great prerogatives for the prince, and finally the Liberals’ willingness to compromise with the Crown constituted Marković’s principal points of criticism. It was the predicament of liberalism in Serbia that, chronologically, it was to take root in a period when liberal politics were already under attack by leftist critics in the West. Moreover, the credibility of liberalism was undermined in Serbia before a truly representative system had even been established. Notwithstanding, Marković borrowed from the liberal ideological arsenal, incorporating several of their prominent themes: the quest for national liberation and unification, a whole package of civil liberties, freedom of expression and association, the notion of popular sovereignty, the critique of the bureaucracy, and the notion of popular self-government.³⁰ Borrowing from the liberal camp did not necessarily imply an endorsement of the individualistic liberal societal vision, as at the same time the Radicals rejected the civil values that accompanied the liberal provisions. Hostility to the formal and abstract character of liberal rights and half-measures, which promulgated democratic principles but did little for the concrete fortunes of the peasant, had also formed part of the Russian populist movement, for example in Chernyshevsky’s ideas.³¹ Coming to power in 1888, the Radicals were to promote and introduce legislation reflecting several of the liberal demands.

Opposition to the rule of the Liberals arose in the 1870s on two flanks: the Radicals and the Young Conservatives—alias Progressives. Both oppositional groups were, in part, offshoots of the Liberals, having associated at a certain point and to a certain degree with the initial liberal movement, only to be disgruntled by liberalism in action. Their criticism of the Liberals was founded, however, on very different ideological premises. The Progressives were to replace the Liberals as the governing elite, and it was due to the collaboration of the Radicals and the Progressives that the Liberals were evicted from power in the 1880s. Enjoying the trust of King Milan Obrenović, once in charge of

the government the Progressives showed no intention of conceding to the Radicals their share of the political spoils.

The Progressives represented perhaps the best-educated and the most Westernized group of Serbian intellectuals, whose studies had predominantly been in the field of law. Whereas both the Liberals and the Radicals envisioned an amalgam of modernity and tradition, albeit in very different modes and expressed in diametrically opposed programs, the Progressives did not share their optimism about accommodating in the notion of a modern state the patriarchal traditions of peasant Serbia. On the contrary, they opted for pure "Westernization," advocating that Serbia had to rid itself once and for all of the patriarchal baggage of the past by adopting a genuinely modern constitutional system and developing along the lines of a modern European state. This would entail promoting men of knowledge and expertise to key positions would secure and promote progress, by professionalizing the judiciary, improving education and creating a second chamber, a senate, as a counter-balance to the peasant-dominated *Skupština*.

With respect to the differences between the Liberals and the Progressives as regards parliamentary designs, the historian Slobodan Jovanović has noted:

The difference between the Progressives and the Liberals was the following. The Liberals established a peasant *Skupština*, elected almost through general suffrage, but they did not provide this *Skupština* with the prerogatives it normally enjoys in parliamentary countries. The Progressives, on the contrary, furnished the parliament with the competencies characteristic of parliamentary countries; however, their parliament consisted of two houses, and the suffrage was limited to those with high property qualifications. The Liberals tried to build a bureaucratic government based on democratic conditions. The Progressives intended to build a parliamentary government resting on an undemocratic basis. The Progressives were more liberal than the Liberals, but the Liberals were more democratic.³²

In the modernizing design of the Progressives, there was little space for the peasant, who was not even attributed the folkloristic role that the Liberals had conceded to him. The Progressives laid greater emphasis on securing internal freedoms and civic liberties, whereas the Liberals had emphasized foreign policy and autonomy for Serbia.³³ The Progressives were instrumental in promoting legislation that liberalized the public sphere, relaxing restrictions on the press and allowing for the

establishment of political organizations. It was on these premises that a proper party system was to be introduced in Serbia, transforming loose political groupings into political parties. The Radicals set the example by institutionalizing themselves as a party in 1881, which was followed in the same year by both the Liberals and the Progressives.

The Radicals developed their concrete political activity, public and parliamentary, in tactical and ideological opposition to the policies of King Milan, the Liberals and the Progressives. For Nikola Pašić, the Liberals were the incarnation of bureaucracy, “which delivers the greatest sorrows, corrupts and demoralizes the people and is the greatest adversary of self-management.”³⁴ The same Pašić pointedly summarized the civilizational chasm between the reason d’être and social vision of the Radicals and their political adversaries:

The Liberal and the Progressive parties are followers of Western European institutions, with the sole difference that Ristić [leader of the Liberals] is somewhere in the middle ground, being more cautious and slower on the issue of the transfer of Western institutions to our country and being of the opinion that some institutions and customs of the Serbian people should be preserved. The Progressives instead desire to turn Serbia into some kind of small Western state [*državnica*], for they consider everything Serbian and Slavic worthless. Our party, on the contrary, considers that the Serbian people dispose of many good and healthy institutions and customs, which need only be fostered and supplemented with these worthy institutions of the Russian people and the rest of the Slavic tribes, borrowing from the West only technical knowledge and science and employing them in the Slavic-Serbian spirit ... [T]he weight of our political struggle consisted in preserving the good institutions harmonious with the Serbian spirit and hindering the introduction of new Western institutions, which would destroy the original life of our people and would create confusion in the national/popular movement and life.”³⁵

A significant turning point in the development of the Serbian state came with the Congress of Berlin (1878), which not only established Serbian independence but signaled the reorientation of Serbian foreign policy away from the traditional ally Russia towards Austria–Hungary. The Radicals feared both the internal and external consequences of this new alignment (a commercial agreement with Austria–Hungary, concessions for the construction of railways, etc.), which they attributed to the deliberate designs by the Liberals and the Progressives to transform Serbia according to the pattern of Western European states, and which

ran diametrically counter to their own conception of a popular people's state.³⁶ Coming to power upon the fall of the liberal Ristić government, the Progressives pursued two principal long-term goals: the building up of the independent state and the fulfillment of international obligations following the Berlin Congress. The far-reaching and profound modernization scheme of the Progressives (the liberalization of the state, constitutional reform, the creation of a standing army, compulsory elementary education, etc.), represented an even greater threat to traditional society than had liberalism, and an even deeper *caesurae* into its value systems and institutions. The more the Progressives sought to accelerate this process, the more the Radicals were determined to obstruct them. What the Progressives understood to be a "civilizing process" was for the Radicals a betrayal of national originality, accomplished with the consent and under the command of King Milan. Under these circumstances, if the ruling elite sought change by leaning on the assistance of the Crown, the Radicals sought to counterbalance modernization from above by leaning on the target of modernization, the peasantry. "It is thus not inexplicable that they found a strong response [with the peasantry] even when they acted against the actual momentary interest of the peasant."³⁷ The two modernization options offered alternatively by the Progressives and the Radicals prescribed two alternative paths of modernization for independent Serbia. "Both possibilities had an equally firm internal logic, but clearly enjoyed unequal support in the Serbian society of the times."³⁸

4. A Moral World Imperiled

Feeling threatened by the encroaching forces of modernity, the corrosion of the traditional social structure, the alterations in morals and customs, the intrusion of foreign capital, the growing influence of foreign powers, and the modernization schemes of those who aimed to transform Serbia into a modern state according to Western European standards, the Serbian Radicals were well aware of being at the crossroads of modernity. Conscious of the poverty and backwardness of their country, and under pressure to find a timely answer to the thorny issue of development, the Radicals were persuaded that time was running against them, exposing them to inevitable and uncontrollable events, as “the waves of the European market strike against the borders of Serbia.”³⁹ Nikola Pašić phrased his concern in terms that resemble very much contemporary visions of globalization:

Roads, which were previously journeyed in a month’s time and with great uncertainty, are traveled today in less than a day, while some that used to take years do not require more than a couple of weeks. Moreover, *the whole European world is living one and the same life*. From Paris to Istanbul, telegraphic wires carry the same news to everybody and vice versa. From East to West, the whole empire knows what the Tsar announces in Petrograd the very same day. Correspondingly, the Tsar is informed on the same day about the most significant events in his kingdom. *The world is, so to say, compressed into one house*. Due to the disappearance of obstacles to expansion, industrial and socio-economic life is organized according to the following fashion, whereby some [people/nations] disappear, disintegrate or are forced to unite their forces with the already existing strong alliances. The economic-industrial struggle has become more intensive and extensive. At every step there is competition and at every step you witness how the strongest subjugates the weakest.⁴⁰

The Serbian radical intelligentsia expressed essentially the concerns of a patriarchal society in collision with the anonymous forces of modernity. Their *desiderata* were contained in a non-negligible but wishful package: an acceptable form of modernization, controlling and simul-

taneously accelerating its pace, but also suitable answers to the issue of social equality, political freedom and the national question. Following in the footsteps of the Russian Populists, and reckoning Serbia's "backwardness" to be an advantage, the Radicals sought to preserve its egalitarian structure and its basic moral physiognomy while avoiding repeating the Western path of social evolution. Alexander Gerschekron has maintained that the "situation in a backward country may be conceived of as a state of tension between its actualities and potentialities,"⁴¹ and it was undeniably this hiatus that spurred both the radical critique and the radical vision. The potential of the Radicals' understanding lay not solely in the prospect of catching up with contemporary civilization and progress, but also in making use of the historical experience of European civilization and the perspectives it offered as a compass for an indigenous, original and equitable social development. The search for a developmental model attuned to the spirit of the Serbian traditions, both economic and political, remained a persistent theme of radical doctrine. If the social question, as posed by socialist critics in the West, pertained to the issue of a more equitable distribution of wealth, in the case of Serbia the creation of wealth was the indisputable priority: "Our state is one of the youngest in Europe; we are just now starting to build a house, while other nations/people are already proprietors. In order for us to become big masters too, we need time, but it is our duty to ensure that this time arrives as soon as possible."⁴²

Salvation was sought in a formula that would allow for growth, while impeding class division in a society just starting to experience social differentiation. In this respect, the first Serbian Socialists were both products of their times and of their own specific social milieu: "They were a reflex of a modern phenomenon, the idea of socialism, but also the mouthpieces of their patriarchal society."⁴³ Their populist doctrine fed on, and simultaneously codified, the values of the peasant world into political ideology.⁴⁴ Theoretically leaning on Chernyshevsky, the shortcut to modernity and to socialism—representing the most perfected form of modern social existence—was to be found in the retention and perfection of traditional patriarchal institutions, the *obština* (community) and the *zadruga* (extended family).⁴⁵ Already embodying the major principles of socialist social organization, that is, labor association and collective ownership, the patriarchal forms of social organization were ideally suited to guarantee a safe passage to the most

advanced stages of modernity. Hence, historical conditions in Serbia provided a unique chance. The average yeoman, with his little holding, lived more or less in a state of egalitarianism. Protecting this equality against the invasion of the cash economy was a principal aim of the Radicals. Leaning on the popular patriarchal institutions, moreover, signified supporting institutions emanating directly from the people, and moreover institutions that formed part of an indigenous social, political, cultural and moral legacy. In the early radical doctrine the institution of the *zadruga* was appreciated less for its patriarchal qualities, but rather for its collectivist labor organization, its mutualist ethos and its communal “democratic” spirit. Moreover, it was considered the institution that had historically preserved the essence and the customs of Serbdom during the Ottoman rule. With time, the attachment of the Socialists to the *zadruga* was to become less practical, and more of an emotional and symbolic nature, until the final abandonment of “*zadruga* socialism” as the cornerstone of radical philosophy.

5. The Mission: Saving Serbdom

The metamorphosis of patriarchal institutions into modern productive associations was to be accomplished by grafting them with the most contemporary scientific knowledge. For the early Radicals science meant the axiomatic rule of the universal and objective principles of truth and was considered a value-free property. Applying, thus, modern science to social engineering meant for the Serbian Socialists the instrumentalization of Western, predominantly technological, know-how, but without its broader contextual reference. Interestingly enough, here we seem to have a reversal of a common topos, whereby scientific and technological civilization has a pernicious homogenizing effect, that is, a tendency to level out local cultural differences. On the contrary, here technological innovation is evaluated positively throughout, while the true menace lies in the corrosive effects of capitalistic development. The problem consisted, rather, in the fact that science, and consequently knowledge, in the Western context had become the monopoly of a minority. The historical chance for Serbia lay in the application of the same expertise on a broader scale and under very different social conditions. Science, as the most perfected form of contemporary knowledge about the world, would thus benefit and be of service to the people:

For us today, it is not necessary to invent either the steam machine, or the railway, or the telegraph, or the great laws of Newton and Darwin, or the rules of social order, or any other scientific truths and their technical applications, since all this has already been discovered. Neither is it necessary to go the painful way of the division of labor to the bitter end, when the whole of Europe is trying to liberate itself from it. For us it is only necessary to perfect our social institutions, to study, master and adopt all the scientific discoveries that have already been invented, and arrange the division and composition of labor in the most useful manner for the development of the individual personality and the whole of society. This can obviously be best achieved through the scientific development of our popular institutions.⁴⁶

Similar to the Russian archetype, the Serbian answer to modernization was emotional, defensive and deeply national. Confrontation with the exigencies of modernity signaled a need to renew one's own position, falling back on one's native strengths, drawing upon the capacities of the indigenous arsenal, the more so as social disintegration paragoned the loss of identity. Restricting the flood of foreign capital and foreign products, of foreigners buying up Serbian land, of foreign industrialists receiving excessive rights, of foreign countries raiding Serbian raw materials, became a mission: saving Serbdom. Patriarchal structures were perceived as the true repository of Serbian values, the highest virtue of which was the spirit of egalitarianism. Avoiding the exigencies of capitalism meant escaping class differentiation, a threat to the coherence both of the social and the national body. Socialism thus, was the salvation of the egalitarian spirit of the nation. The complete congruence of socialist and national values in the doctrine of the early Radicals was manifested in the formula postulating the indivisibility of the social and the national revolution:

Through revolution the Serbian people will liberate their patriarchal institutions, the remnants of their former civilization, both from the pressure of Turkish violence and the pressure of foreign influences. The Serbian people will have the possibility to rise to an original Slavic structure on the basis of their popular institutions and concepts and on the basis of contemporary science. They will achieve the foundation of a society on the basis of contemporary science, equality and brotherly reciprocity, which is the goal of all progressive people in the world.⁴⁷

In the eyes of the early Radicals, bourgeois modernization was understood as an acute civilizational clash, whereby form substituted essence. The Serbian political elite's uncritical adaptation of Western forms (institutions, customs and way of life) had been detrimental for the majority of the population. By endorsing "external forms" they had opened the door to "damned fashions" and Western bourgeois—essentially materialistic—civilization, a "civilization that is measured according to the number of rich individuals and the quantity of material things they can demonstrate to the rest of the world, a civilization that is characterized through the brilliancy of the rulers, the wealth and embellishment of their environment, while at the same time the majority of the people are humiliated and impoverished to the extremes."⁴⁸

Marković identified civilization instead as the degree of egalitarianism pertaining in a society, the equality characterizing its social relationships. The idealized “purity” and “virtuousness” of indigenous Serbian culture was contrasted with the “decadence” and “debauchery” of a degenerate West:

In the Serbian patriarchal society there never existed either prostitution or pauperism which are plaguing hundreds of people in the West; Serbs never degenerate into drunkards, a malady of the whole Western workers' world, and love never turns to debauchery. Family relationships and communal reciprocity protected the people from the extreme social illnesses characteristic of the workers' world in the West. The reciprocity of the whole community is reflected in everyday life, but also in external affairs ... Family love raises the nobility of sentiments in humans ... Precisely for this reason, all conditions for the development of moral feelings and the spiritual capacities of the personality are much higher in patriarchal society than in the worker's life in civilized society.⁴⁹

6. The Individual and Society

In the Radical's view, Serbia belonged clearly to the Slavic typology of civilization, the principle of which feature lay in the indivisibility of the notions of state and society. Slavic civilization did not recognize a distinction between the private and the public sphere. As the basis of social organization of a whole society the Slavic community guaranteed to each and every member the necessities of life, not on the basis of a written law or through the implementation of force, but through benevolent patrimonial practice. The Slavic community arranged its public affairs independently, and its institutions were the exact opposite of the foundations of contemporary European civilization. "In the Slavic society issues which in the West are considered private are considered as general and public and vice versa."⁵⁰ The radical key to civilization was *egalitarian and collectivistic*, the complete antithesis of civil society and its principal values: private property and individuality.⁵¹

Seeking to minimize the division of labor as practiced in the capitalistic West, Marković counterpoised to labor alienation the full and all-round worker of the pre-industrial period. The division of labor restrained and routinized the sphere of professional activity, producing dull and underdeveloped personalities. Similar to Mikhailovski's formula of "individuality," whereby the "interests of individuality coincided with 'undivided,' non-specialized labor,"⁵² Marković argued for the necessity of each individual performing diversified and variegated labor as a means of perfecting one's own personality and, as a consequence, of reforming the whole of society. The results of the division of labor as epitomized in contemporary science, machinery, etc., had to be put to the service of humans, with the explicit goal of limiting the division of labor to the greatest extent possible.⁵³

Central to the egalitarian project of the Radicals was the relationship between private ownership and the options available in the existing social structure of ownership relationships in Serbia. Considering private ownership of the means of production and the land to be the bed-rock of social division and the source of exploitation, they reckoned a

collectivism achieved through producer associations or a popular state to be the best basis of a new future civilization.⁵⁴ In contrast to the West, where mass factory production and unionized labor had created the material conditions for social revolution, the prospects for such a revolution in Serbia were clearly meager, if existent at all. The mass of the population were peasants—small owners. Social change could be achieved either through a repetition of the Western evolutionary model (land concentration, accumulation of capital, social divisions, etc.), which the Radicals clearly rejected, or through association, which to the Serbian Radicals seemed the most plausible alternative.

The socialist project envisioned the creation of a people's state (*Narodna država*): the owner, organizer, and regulator of the means of production and the guarantor of a just division of wealth, "in other words, a state identical with society."⁵⁵ This conception was opposed to the model of the legalistic, centralized, bureaucratic, liberal state. It was, in other words, the complete antithesis of the *Rechtsstaat*. According to Marković, the bourgeois-liberal state signified nothing more than the "organized government of the bourgeoisie over the rest of the people." Its capacity to exploit was founded precisely on the principle of freedom. "Is such a relationship moral? According to bourgeois conceptions, this is the actual perfection of moral. But the most important thing is that this kind of relationship is legal, guaranteed by the state through law and maintained through violence. Such relationships are not an exception in civilized society."⁵⁶ On the contrary, in radical doctrine, the state was to be the expression of collective will and rights.

Conceived as a purely decentralized entity, organized for the broadest possible popular participation, it was to function on the basis of self-regulating communities according to the principle of self-government (*samouprava*). The authority of the state did not lie in its capacity to enforce law. To the degree that the state was identical with the people, the connection was far more organic. This was not a disciplining state, but rather a social, and by consequence, a moral state. A state patterned on the reciprocal model of the *zadruga*:

The natural development of Serbian civilization would be to consolidate, expand and institutionalize the very same concepts which regulate the Serbian community and the relationships among its members, and on that same basis to organize the district (*okrug*) like an assembly of

socio-economic communities, and the whole state, like an assembly of big communities—districts. This way the Serbian state would become a social institution—an institution whose general goal would be to perfect, through social effort, every individual personality and develop and organize the work and the production of the people; in other words: the Serbian state would become what contemporary European states sought, that is: a *zadruga*, through which everybody would acquire for himself the supplies which he himself can not procure.⁵⁷

7. The Radicals and the Nation

Marković advanced a most challenging and original response to the question of Serbian liberation and unification. The initial vision concerning the form of the future Serbian state had been provided by Ilija Garašanin in his *Načertanije* of 1844.⁵⁸ His project of “Greater Serbia” took the mediaeval Serbian state as its starting point and the blueprint of a future state constellation. It envisioned the expansion of Serbia upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which was thereupon called to play the role of the Balkan Piedmont. Appealing not only to the historical rights of the Serbs, but also to their leading role in the liberation struggle, the Serbs were rightfully entitled to leadership, a circumstance that ought to be acknowledged and respected by the rest of the South Slavs. In the wake of 1848 the Liberals in Serbia linked the issue of national unification to internal reforms, arguing their case for popular sovereignty against a monarchical and bureaucratic state. By 1858, however, the Liberals resolved to compromise with the monarchy, transferring their center of gravity from republicanism to constitutional monarchy and parliamentarism. It was on the initiative of the Liberals that the *Omladina* youth organization was created in the early 1860s, based on the model of *Young Italy*, with the aim of rallying together and promoting the interests of scattered Serbs. The *Omladina* was no revolutionary organization; it favored liberal principles and strove for national unification. Its activity was predominantly literary and heavily under the spell of the Liberals’ national romanticism.⁵⁹ The *Omladina* offered young Marković a first political platform for confrontation as he developed progressively from an enthusiastic liberal into its socialist critic. Marković considered the national aspirations of the *Omladina* insufficient, arguing for the necessity to link the national question with the broader social and political issue. Unification could be both progressive and regressive; it contained thus no value in itself, unless materialized simultaneously within an appropriate and just political system. Unification under any other terms equaled the exchange of one tyranny for another. Marković criticized the unrealistic “Don-Quichot-

ic” foundations of the “Greater Serbia” project. Every augmentation of Serbian territory translated involuntarily into the subjugation of other nationalities, encroaching on their rights of existence, provoking and perpetuating enmity.

As all insightful Balkan federalists, Marković recognized the crux of the national problem in the Balkans: the impossibility to define with precision the geographical borders of a nationality, in other words, that ethnic and geographical borders were almost never congruent. “The Serbs have no geographic or ethnographic borders which would define them as a natural unit.”⁶⁰ The enlargement of Serbia could only go hand in hand with the impoverishment of the population, while Serbia turned into a military-police state. For Marković unification signified the intellectual and cultural development of a people, the development of moral freedom, as opposed to the “unity of bureaus” (*jedinstvo kancelarija*), which was the best way to strangle popular progress. Considering the creation of a pure and centralized nation state to be an illusion, Marković envisioned Serbian unification rather in cultural terms. To the legitimizing principle of the centralized nation state, he counterpoised the revolutionary, federative alternative: a social revolution that would simultaneously liberate co-nationals and permeate the borders of nation-states, and unity with the immediate and kindred neighbors, with the prospect of establishing a federation with the rest of the Balkan Peninsula. The federal solution was inseparable from the issue of the wholesale transformation of the state and was intricately linked to the axioms of social rights, personal freedom, and the association and fraternization of nations. Historically and theoretically, the federal vision had been a part of French socialism but was prevalent also in the thoughts of M. A. Bakunin. When the later Radicals abandoned Marković’s internationalism in the name of an overt and articulate nationalism, the federal legacy was to pass to the Social Democrats and later to the Communists.

As designed by Svetozar Marković, the initial radical response to modernization was national but not nationalistic. Although expressing a desire to conserve traditional elements, it was not conservative, nor necessarily anti-modern. Rather, it displayed a Janus-like ambiguity with respect to the contingent organization of the building blocks of time. The sequences of past-present-future are neither linear nor sequential. The Radicals’ project was not “back to the past” but “back

to the future,” a Janus making the best of two worlds that were as distinct as can be possibly imagined. It is important to bear in mind that Marković never endorsed a full withdrawal into crude traditionalism; this point had precisely constituted his critique of *Omladina*’s romanticism. Not everything Serbian nor inherited had to be conserved. The past as a value in itself was inadequate, while the past as guidance for the future was limited. Furthermore, Marković was fully convinced and aware of the necessity of mass production and associative labor as prerequisites for growth; echoing Marx, he was not a Marxist.⁶¹ A higher and more effective form of productivity was desired, but it was an industrialization that would not predispose the division of society into a bourgeoisie and a proletariat.

The radical path to progress thus attempted a synthesis which negated a simple reproduction of national traditions as it did the mechanical repetition of the other peoples’ modernizing experience. Its political program envisioned an organic merging of traditional and modernist elements, hoping to instill modern socialist principles in traditional Serbian political and economic institutions. Herein lies the ambivalent attitude of the Radicals towards history. As intellectuals in a developing country they were in a perfect position of “liminality,” aware of the costs of modernization as well as the advantages of their traditional society. There was “nothing inherently unreasonable in their attempt to combine the best of past and future.”⁶² Moreover, as maintained by J. Skerlić, when Marković started his efforts in Serbia in the 1870s, “other ways, ideas and arguments would have gotten him nowhere. In an economically backward country, where social contradictions had not developed, where social classes had only just started to emerge, and where in particular, the working class did not exist at all, his socialism could not be but intellectual and ethical, an appeal to reason and sentiment.”⁶³ As others before and after him, Marković articulated the worries, dilemmas and visions of the latecomers of modernity: The quest for an appropriate and original model of modernization pertaining to societies outside but confronted by the race with the “First World.”⁶⁴

Acknowledging not only the disparity of development, but also perceiving their local development within the broader balance of forces in the game of European expansion and big power considerations, the Radical Socialists showed perspicacity and an alertness to geopolitics as a crucial component of the Eastern Question and a vital parameter for

the existence and survival of economically small and politically peripheral states. A preoccupation with the global project of colonialism, with the long-term political calculations of their mighty neighbors and the broader political designs of the big powers involved in the region was a persistent and durable trait of the radical political philosophy, apparent in a protracted pedigree from early Socialists like Živojin Žujović to later Radicals like Nikola Pašić. Arguing, for example, against the construction of a railway in Serbia, Žujović warned against the advantages offered to foreign capital invested in the construction, the danger of being degraded to a raw material-exporting country and the demoralizing effects that the above would have on local society. The example used to fortify his argumentation was the British opium trade in the Far East. "The history of the East and its association with the European nations is a testimony that the relationship of the so-called civilized people with simple, non-civilized ones, initially always produces demoralization in the latter, making them idle, reckless squanderers. To a certain extent and for the same reasons, the same phenomenon can be observed also in our country. The history of the British opium trade is in its essence analogous to the general history of commodities brought from 'civilization' to 'barbarism'."⁶⁵ One of the most recurrent themes in Pašić's analysis of Serbia's geopolitical position was the necessity to barricade the country against the intrusion of "Germanism," usually cited as the *Drang nach Osten*. Analyzing European big power considerations, Pašić considered that "the colonial or colonization question was a convenient instrument as it could be for the diplomatic game. The interests of all European states are more or less entangled in this [question], which allows German politics to proceed without risks, and in such arrangements as they desire."⁶⁶ Pašić's political philosophy was determined by the close, intricate and troubled relationship of Serbia with Austria-Hungary and was shaped as much by the dictates of *Realpolitik* as by the organic civilizational Slavophilic worldview that he espoused at the time. In Pašić's *Weltanschauung* internal politics were intricately connected to external geopolitics, since the domestic politics of the state were strongly influenced by its position in a larger world.

8. A l'attaque

In 1868 Marković explicitly defined the strategy of the intelligentsia:

Having risen to leadership, be it through luck or coincidence, the minority has the duty *to speak to the people*—so that they come to realize what they *don't know*, [that is,] that they have been flattered and anaesthetized—, and also tell them the truth as sharply and clearly as possible and ensure that this truth is heard by the majority. This is the only way to inform the majority on [the issues] that the minority already knows [for] all popular goals can only be achieved through popular toil. For the people to move with common energy towards a common goal, they have to become conscious, that means [they have] to recognize this common goal and the paths that lead to it, and what is most important they have to be deeply convinced that the *personal well-being* of every member of the people depends ultimately on the achievement of the common goal.⁶⁷

This is precisely what the Radicals set out to achieve: to capture public opinion, secure political rights, and extend the public sphere were the first three indispensable steps to political power. Having opted for a non-violent alternative, and faithful to the prescriptions of their populist doctrine, the Serbian Socialists “went to the people.”

The Radicals embarked on a flamboyant social critique expressed in a new militant posture and a poignant, unprecedented popular language, targeting literally the whole edifice of newly introduced institutions and values in Serbia. A special venom was reserved for the privileged state bureaucracy, “the mass that knows no God,” portrayed literally as a class, an alien strata of non-productive people, introducing foreign habits and corrupting local morals. The attack on the bureaucracy as the guardians of a parasitic state and the perpetrators of class divisions within egalitarian Serbian society constituted their strongest weapon, and the juxtaposition of the privileged, non-productive bureaucracy against the productive but exploited *narod*, formed the central plank of the radical offensive. A critique of the bureaucratic system had previously also formed part of the liberal program. The Liberals, however, had criticized the bureaucracy from a political point of

view, attacking civil servants on the grounds that they were amassing excessive political power. On the contrary, the Radicals attacked the bureaucratic system from an economic standpoint, crediting it with the ruination and exploitation of the peasantry.⁶⁸ The Radicals' economic analysis was prone to demonstrate the peasant's "proletarianization" as the probable outcome of the impositions of the state and its need to sustain an expensive apparatus, thus placing an excessive load on peasant economic capacities.

As an alternative to this bureaucratic state responsible for the moral and material decline of the people, the Radicals counterpoised the principle of self-management: the empowerment of the people to run their own affairs. In essence, the Radicals almost proposed the abandonment of the idea of the state, which was to be transformed into a kind of loose union among free districts and communities. The Radicals' socialism was driven by an egalitarian vision, which idolized the *narod* rather than class, and upheld the people as the principal and ultimate source of political authority. This rhetoric culminated in a proper cult of the people, a mass identification of the majority of the population—partners in poverty—against an abusive, non-representative state. Appealing to the population of Kragujevac before elections in 1875, *Staro Oslobođenje* declared itself unwilling to abandon "our cares to the hands ... of one class—the rich, who see in the poor man only the rascal and the thief ... In Serbia, the people are peasants and artisans, and they are poor ..." ⁶⁹ Pera Todorović, in his defense after the "Red Banner" affair (1876), wrote:

The bureaucracy accused me of treasonous engagement against the throne, and [in turn] I accuse it, I put it on trial for treasonous engagement against freedom, consciousness, reason, science, and dignity. The bureaucracy accuses me in the name of the throne and I accuse it in the name of our naked, hungry and oppressed people ... We Socialists work rather for the fortification of love and harmony among peoples, thus we preach solidarity and reciprocity, we wish to uproot the cause of every hatred among the peoples—[that is] *inequality*. The bureaucracy, on the contrary, endorses, supports and assists the growth of inequality in possessions, rights, and duties among the people and by consequence sustains the source and cause of all hatred, discord and bickering among the citizens. *The true corrupter, therefore, is the bureaucracy.*⁷⁰

The list of evils was long: the salaries of civil servants, new parasitic professions (particularly lawyers), excessive state budgets, new urban fashions, the increasing material needs of the urban dwellers, greedy merchants bringing new commodities to the countryside and unfair taxation. The loss of the autarchy of the Ottoman period was lamented as was the corrosion of the traditional popular institutions. The disintegration of the household and the introduction of the moneyed economy were noted and blamed on the new principle of competition. These developments were accompanied by the introduction of a new set of values, characterized by "smartness, a speculative and enterprising spirit and a considerable quantity of shrewdness and selfishness." Echoing the aspirations of the peasant world,⁷¹ the Radicals thus demanded a simplification of the administrative system, the curtailment, if not abolition, of the bureaucracy, and the broadest possible restitution of administrative functions back to the local level. The key concept was self-management, a state built on administrative units of manageable proportions like the *opština* (community), the *srez* (small district) and the *okrug* (county), guaranteeing cost-effective functioning of the state and the broadest possible basis of direct participation.⁷² As regards the realm of justice, the Radicals castigated the rule of the legal code and demanded a return to customary law, if possible the total repatriarchalization of the legal system, which would be based not on legal formulas but attuned to the reciprocal morality of the community. Away with the professionals, back to common logic, reason and consciousness; it was an apotheosis of the wisdom of the common man: "The court has to be given to the people" since "common man goes about justice as if holding an axe. He knows not the finesses of the legal clause, but has a quick eye and a reliable hand before he strikes."⁷³

The radical response to the changes brought about through socio-economic transition was characterized by a high degree of moral indignation and retrospective romanticism. The loss of virtuousness of an idealized bygone age was lamented. Emphasized, rather, were the qualities of the social fabric that allowed for a conception of the past as a model of natural harmony. Frequent nostalgic references to the past were used both as an anchoring and a contrasting point in order to highlight the uncertainty and the "deterioration" of the present:

Who does not mourn nowadays the various lost and forgotten virtues of our people? Where are the times when lending money took place under four eyes, without witnesses, interest or obligations? Where are the times when one believed in the honest word, when neighbors helped each other, when the village took care of the land of the sick peasant, when widows were provided with felled wood by fellow townsmen, when the orphans were sheltered and adopted so that they would not stray, when the peasants pacified litigants so that they would not go to court? Where are our moral economic institutions that rescued our people from ruin during hard times? Where are our *zadrugas*, work teams (*sprege*), cooperative work groups (*mobe*), lending practices (*pozajmice*), sheepfolds (*bačijanja*)? Where is this popular moral that preaches reciprocity, love, help and protection? All this no longer exists. Today we have legal clauses, obligations, confiscations, sequesters, receiverships ... Bankruptcy, gentlemen, bankruptcy in all directions: economic, sanitary, and moral; these are the awful words that register our progress. We are progressing, but we are progressing on the path that leads to ruin. Serbia barefoot, indebted and alienated—this is contemporary Serbia.⁷⁴

9. The Railway

The discourse generated by the creation of the railway in Serbia is exemplary of the Radicals' attitude towards modernity. The railway represented, in both real and symbolic terms, an intersection of economic, geopolitical and cultural preoccupations. The creation of the railway, far from being beneficial for Serbia, would only lead to the country's economic exploitation by stronger nations and magnanimous neighbors like Austria, while in the case of war it would facilitate invasion by both Austria and Ottoman Turkey.⁷⁵ The construction company in charge would gain control of the country's import-export circulation, and Belgrade would be reduced to a petty local market, an intermediary between Turkey and Austria.⁷⁶ The railway was a profitable transportation means only for countries with strongly developed industrial production. It would little serve Serbia's position as a raw material producer with limited and patriarchal needs.⁷⁷ On the contrary, it would be of great use for merchants and the agents of foreign capitalists and companies. The railroad would enhance the influence of foreign cultural forms and of more advanced and educated people over the less educated. Serbia's position of backwardness demanded that the country enter into foreign competition with the least possible risk.⁷⁸ Most significantly, the creation of the railway would endanger Serbia's cultural mission in the East and the political project of liberating co-nationals, while facilitating the designs of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia.⁷⁹

The most forceful argument centered on the case of the railway as being absolutely antithetical to the interests, livelihood and customs of the real producer, the Serbian peasant. Contrary to the Liberals, the Radicals denied that open markets and intensified communications would increase productivity. What the Liberals understood to be the wealth of the nation was in essence the accumulation of wealth in the hands of one class. Serbia was an agrarian nation, and the key to its growth lay in agriculture.⁸⁰ The railway was too costly an enterprise to be loaded on the peasants' shoulders, and its advantages, the acceleration of transportation, did not serve the peasants' real needs. Speed

is necessary and profitable for nations with advanced commercial activity. A rich nation seeks speed, yet speed has never made a nation rich, since "speed is expensive and time is a cheap commodity for underdeveloped nations." Speed did not correspond to the seasonal time and the concept of production of the peasant. In the agrarian mind, perceptions of time and work were basically task and season oriented. The peasant travels only after completing his seasonal and domestic obligation. Spare time in the peasant's logic is "the time that does not cost him anything"; it is "cheap time," meaning the concept of saving time is not a real issue. The slogan "time is money" may be valid for the English and Americans, but not for Serbs. Consequently, for "nations where time is really cheap, it is a real luxury to spend money for the purpose of saving time."⁸¹

Opposition to the railway was an enduring theme of Radical politics. The fear of foreign enterprises and capitalists getting the upper hand in Serbian internal arrangements, both political and economic, was the primary consideration. It was thus the duty of the government "to bring advanced industry in accordance with popular-national interests; to prohibit industrial enterprises of primary importance for popular welfare from falling into the hands of entrepreneurs with diametrically opposing interests to the national ones, ... [and to ensure that] the railway should not damage popular-national freedoms and welfare ... [given that] capitalist society is rarely humane towards its own citizens, and even more rarely towards foreign ones. [Furthermore] it is often difficult to guarantee the profits of foreign capital and at the same time safeguard popular-national interests."⁸² This "evil" seemed to become flesh and blood with the stipulations of the Congress of Berlin, which not only obliged Serbia to construct a railway within a definite time limit, but also to do so in cooperation with Austria-Hungary. For Nikola Pašić this was the ultimate proof of the intention to subjugate the Serbian state to foreign control:

All that our railway could export are raw materials necessary for Austro-Hungarian industry. By the time we will have finished with the export of raw materials, we will have become laborers of foreign manufacturers and capitalists ... Our industry is not adequately developed so as to find a cheap and quick path to world markets. Our commerce has not expanded and ramified to the extent that it requires a railway. Our agriculture is

not so developed as to require the railway. According to the Berlin agreement, we have to construct a railway not for our commerce, but that of the worlds' ... Austria–Hungary forced us to construct a railway. It seeks to shut our borders and lead us to ruin. This signifies undoubtedly that it will seek to harm us by all possible means ... Austro-Hungarian politics seeks to subsume Bosnia and the road leading to Thessaloniki ... If it wishes to control us in the political sphere, it will do so in the economic sphere as well ... Her intention is to indebt us heavily. Her interest is to subjugate our commerce to hers; and we will simply become one of her provinces.⁸³

10. The Agrarian Radicals

Seminal in the development of the Radicals was the appearance of an opposition group of agrarian representatives in the *Skupština* of 1874, the first authentic grass-root expression of peasant discontent. Centered on the figure of Adam Bogosavljević, who was to be joined by a group of similarly minded delegates (Dimitrije Katić, Milija Milovanović, Miloš Glišić, Ranko Tajić), this constituted the first peasant group to be represented in the parliament. Coming from diverse regions in Serbia, they carried to the capital a message of provincial dissatisfaction, and the firmness and the bellicosity of the groups' resistance to central authority made it popular and broadly known throughout the country. Eventually—as will be shown below—the Radical Party was able to “tap this deep reservoir of peasant resentment,” which Bogosavljević had been the first to articulate, and make use of the Peasant Radicals' legacy for its own purposes.

In terms of social background, the Bogosavljević group came directly from the agrarian milieu. It verbalized the spontaneous reaction of the progressively alienated peasant world to the effects of modernization, representing a kind of unpremeditated and unmediated non-intellectualized agrarian populism. In the hands of the radical *narodnik* intelligentsia, it was to be transformed from a latent and potential tendency into a programmatic message, as the Radicals conjured an organic notion of the abstract concept of the “people” as resting in the very real bulk of the Serbian peasantry, making these terms synonymous. By absorbing and appropriating the legacy of the Bogosavljević group, the Radicals managed to effectively stifle the rise of a genuine, grass-roots peasant party. It is significant to underline that the populist socialism of the Radicals met the discontent and the collectivist aspirations of the agrarian world half-way, adopting therefore several of their concrete social and political demands, and echoing to a large extent their worldview. Along with other factors, this goes far to explain the large-scale success of the Radical Party.

Coming from a wealthy Koprivnica peasant family, Bogosavljević, who had abandoned his education in philosophy at the Belgrade Velika Škola, jettisoned the prospect of a promising civil servant career and returned to his home village determined to contribute to the amelioration of the condition of the peasantry. He set up a model farm and eventually familiarized the peasants of his district with modern agricultural methods like the use of fertilizers and the metal plow. An active member of the Society for Agricultural Improvement, founded in Belgrade in 1869, he was to enjoy the trust and appreciation of his *opština* for which he was rewarded with the office of a *kmet* (president of the community), a post he held for life. Elected to the *Skupština* for the first time in 1874, as a representative of his local constituency, he was re-elected in 1875 as a leader of the Peasant Radicals. Bogosavljević's main concern remained the fortunes of the peasantry, and he sought to articulate the peasant's experience of the new state as a new repressive force. The Peasant Radicals castigated the bureaucratic state and demanded nothing less than its abolition, alternatively the closure of all institutions superfluous to or against the people's interest. A good example of Bogosavljević's anti-bureaucratic tenets is illustrated in the following passage:

But what is uglier and sadder is that our civil servants are only state servants in name, for, in reality, they are masters. Were they to be the people's servants, it would be for the people to fix their salaries and not [for the civil servants] themselves. When a private person fixes a higher interest on his capital and the debtor agrees, then we all call this usury. But when our masters and lords, who consider knowledge to be their capital, take from the people an extravagant interest, that is, fat salaries, and moreover do this against the *people's volition and approval*, this in the bureaucrat's language is not usury, but a reward for having performed a special service to the people ... From the very beginning of our state's existence, our people, if not actually having regressed, have remained on the same level of development. Our whole progress is just the progress of the bureaucracy. And it is simply not fair for some to toil and hunger while others benefit [from this]. For too long, our whole bureaucracy with all its wisdom has proved incapable of advancing the material condition of our people, while living on the people's sweat and poverty. It is no shame for the civil servant to live as modestly as the people.⁸⁴

Regarding every government as deceitful, the mere executive organ of the bureaucracy burdening the peasants' shoulders, Bogosavljević de-

clared war, to be fought to the bitter end, against the state apparatus.⁸⁵ The group demanded that state finances be subordinated to the control of the *Skupština*, the reduction of civil servants' salaries and pensions, the abolition of district officials, the return of policing powers to local control and the communal courts, and the thorough reform of the administrative system in favor of greater local autonomy and self-government. The Peasant Radicals were against the standing army, and demanded the creation of people militias. Attacking the church as an additional bureaucratic institution, they proposed the expropriation of monastic property and the transformation of monasteries into parish churches. They endorsed the curtailment of theater subventions, the reduction of diplomatic representative missions abroad, and cutbacks in the salaries of the diplomatic service. In other words, they attacked everything that was incomprehensible to the peasant mind. During Marković's lifetime, but also after his death (1875), the Radical Socialists lent support to the peasant opposition group in the *Skupština*. Their publications *Oslobodjenje* and *Staro Oslobodjenje* contributed to the popularization of these ideas. In 1878, the peasant parliamentary opposition was to be joined and strengthened in the *Skupština* by a group of Radical Socialists (Nikola Pašić, Sava Obradović, Milan Djurić), whose joint efforts were soon to be subordinated to the leading personality of Nikola Pašić. Bogosavljević's incarceration and sudden death in 1880 provided Pašić with a unique opportunity to exploit his legacy and his popularity. Encouraging the suspicion that Bogosavljević had been purposely poisoned, and instrumentalizing the popular outpouring of sympathy owing to his reputation as a defender of the peasantry, Pašić started to construct the outline of the future Radical Party on the basis of Bogosavljević's initial groundwork. Pašić established a fund for the purpose of educating and supporting Bogosavljević's family and proceeded by setting-up a whole network of local committees to serve as the preliminary organizational units of the future Radical Party.

11. A Popular Party

The Radicals were the first political group in Serbia to organize politically, thus forcing their adversaries to organize. The Radical Party was conceived from the beginning as a massive and powerful organization, meant to literally embody the whole Serbian people.⁸⁶ Svetozar Marković had provided a first blueprint for the projected Radical Party (1872), envisioning the complete destruction of the administrative system en place, the restitution of administrative, economic, educational and policing functions to local control, and broad and extensive powers of the community to regulate local affairs. It included the reform of the judicial system and its replacement by elected courts and popularly elected judges, the creation of a national bank with local branches in charge of all state finances and the cancellation of all peasant debts. Further, “in order to protect the Serbian people from proletarianization, it is necessary to transform all land from private property to communal ownership. How and when this is to be achieved remains open.”⁸⁷ In the same spirit, but in an essentially more popular language, the radical program of Nikola Pašić was published in 1876:

The people are sovereign and have prerogative over all rights with respect to the political and economic organization of the country. The political rights of the individual citizen can be best safeguarded when the community and the district, as well as all of Serbia, are organized on the basis of self-management. Economic freedom, that is independence, can best be achieved through association, if the means for boosting industry and agriculture are entrusted not to *one person*, but to a *cooperative (zadruga)* able to demonstrate its capacity to organize capital and develop the crafts. In other words: we desire democratic freedom and decentralization, we wish to safeguard the people from the mistakes of Western industrial society, where both a proletariat and boundless wealth have emerged; rather [we desire] that industry be developed on a cooperative basis. Therefore we do not campaign with the intention of abolishing the institution of private property, but rather for the farmers to form associations to cultivate the land with the help of machines, for without associations it is impossible to utilize steam machines profitably.⁸⁸

In the above quotation the democratic principle of the people's sovereignty serves as a precondition for the establishment of self-management and socialism. The people's rights and freedoms are not regarded as a goal in themselves, but as a means, an instrument, for the achievement of the end goal. Moreover, individual rights would be "best safeguarded" in the collectivist haven.

Having existed for ten years as a quasi-consolidated movement, the Radicals took advantage of the propitious conditions of 1880 to take their organization a step further. Economic exhaustion following war (1875–1878), the suspension of political freedoms due to the state of emergency, and the orientation of Serbian foreign policy towards much-feared Austria served to compromise the liberal government of Jovan Ristić. Having reached consensus on the necessity of changing the 1869 constitution, the united opposition of the Radicals and the Progressives led to the fall of the liberal regime. Once in control, the Progressives showed no inclination of sharing power with the Radicals, reserving the key state and parliamentary functions for their adherents. As a response, the Radicals accelerated both the formation of their party and their programmatic entry into the public arena. The fall of the Liberals, who had ruled with interruptions for 12 years, the intransigence of the Progressives, and also the lack of organization of both political elites, provided an ideal opportunity. Overall, the Radicals possessed more advantages over their adversaries. They had never been compromised as a ruling party and had no investment in the state apparatus. Their "outsider" status provided an additional source of inspiration, "almost to the point of religious fervor." Moreover, they were one to two generations younger than their opponents and pursued politics with a vitality unmatched by the Liberals and Progressives.⁸⁹ Having had a long gestation in political struggle and equipped both with experience and a support, the Radicals advanced a minimum program of immediate goals that, retreating from its maximalist credo, displayed pragmatism and adaptability.⁹⁰

The program envisioned "popular welfare and freedom" in internal affairs and "state independence, the liberation and unification of the remaining contingents of Serbs" in external affairs. Emphasizing the primacy of the economic factor, it stressed the necessity of improving the material, intellectual and moral forces of the people. It proposed invigorating the collective popular energies and raising the level of ma-

terial welfare by strengthening the productive forces and by providing for an equitable division of state obligations. It demanded constitutional reform, universal suffrage, the regular convocation of a legislature with full legislative competence, the regular summoning of the Great National Assembly (*Velika Narodna Skupština*), the abolition of the State Council, and a simpler and cheaper state administration. The reform of the state sector would be materialized through the reorganization of administrative units, so as to secure their autarchy and executive strength; elective juries; progressive and direct income tax; the reorganization of state finances; the creation of a national bank in charge of state revenue and expenses and responsible for providing an evenhanded distribution of credit in order to boost the agricultural, professional and industrial sectors; general, compulsory and free education; and the transformation of the standing army into a people's militia. The program also proposed the maintenance of good relations with neighboring nationalities, working towards the objective of a Balkan union, coming to a quick understanding with Montenegro and Bulgaria, and lending cultural support to unredeemed Serbs living outside of the kingdom. Full freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association, communal self-government and personal and intellectual safety were all to be anchored in the future constitution. In preparing for the thorough reorganization of the financial sector, frugality in state expenditure and the alleviation of the conditions of debtors were demanded.⁹¹

It has been the contention of some scholars that it is precisely this moment—the radical program of 1881—that signaled the abandonment of Marković's original socialist ideas. In fact, the radical program appears to have been “amputated,” particularly with respect to the organic correlation between political and economic factors, as prevalent in Marković's thinking.⁹² To a large extent the 1881 program followed the initial radical one, but placed greater emphasis on the political than on the economic dimension, although economic aspects were also included. It is evident, however, that the cornerstones of the economic program, consisting of the collective ownership of land and the emphasis on communal economic associations, were dropped, and most conspicuously private property was not targeted. While for Marković communal self-government represented only a consequence of the economic autonomy of the community, and the sovereignty of the *Skupština* a means for the political and economic transformation of society, in the

1881 program they feature as autonomous political demands deprived of their economic dimension.

The contention of the protagonists themselves, however, appears to be different when the selected direction of concrete political action is evaluated. The political and economic questions were ranked according to priorities determined by the available means and projected goals. The primacy of the political questions was driven by the logic to bring the people into politics through reforms on the political level, which was considered to be the precondition for economic transformation.⁹³ Due to the disintegration of traditional institutions (*zadruga*, *obština*), the emphasis was shifted now more to the *state* as the owner of capital and the organizer of national production. The prime consideration was winning power and using it as a lever in order to change the economic and social function of the state for the benefit of the majority of the population. A social state was envisioned, a state that would help develop productive forces and prevent exploitation, while political reform was the first indispensable step to its materialization.⁹⁴ In contrast to the “policing” function of the state in “protecting the personal and property immunity of the citizens,” the Radicals considered “that it is precisely ... the economic aspect, to which the contemporary state properly neglects or attributes very little attention, that is the most important task of the state ... Our party considers that the attainment of bread and physical survival are of primary importance for every individual. And we hold that it is impossible for the state not to concern itself with this primary and most significant question.”⁹⁵

We seek that the state preoccupies itself with the national economy and possessions, for according to our understanding the material welfare, or more simply the affluence of all its citizens, is the basis of all progress ... Bread must come first, and everything else will easily follow. Of course, schools, commerce, industry, political freedom and many other institutions assist the people in working and earning more and better. How to obtain bread easier, this is a crucial issue; hence it is also important to know its basis and its obstacles, *what are the means and what is the goal*. Our party has set to work, and struggles actively. Presently it is engaging its whole strength in order to achieve political freedom. But we are not in the least deceived, and know full well that these political freedoms will be short-lived if, by simply endorsing them, we leave things the way they are. Our party does not think like this. It knows that only through the entire *state potential* will it be possible to create such economic institutions, and

lead the people to prosperity. Consequently, its first task is to remove the state from the hands of the bureaucracy and give it back to the people, so that subsequently the people, by means of the *entire state force*, will be able to arrange their state both politically and economically in such a manner as to assure welfare, which in turn will provide the foundation for the proper development of general enlightenment and freedom. Currently, one stratum—the bureaucracy of the civil servants—utilizes the state strength and people's goods chiefly for its own benefit. Our party seeks to return this strength to the people, so that they make use of it for their own benefit, primarily in order to increase their affluence. These people have worn themselves out for others. Enough! It is high time they did something for themselves.⁹⁶

Without repudiating the original radical formula of skipping phases of development, the 1881 program did not endorse growth on the premise of a capitalistic economy either. The original economic program as conceived by S. Marković was no longer sustainable, while an unlimited sanctioning of capitalism was unacceptable for a socialist party. The program thus represents a middle solution, whereby emphasis is laid on transforming the character of the state. Political reform was intended to turn the people into a political subject, with the end goal of changing the bureaucratic state into a people's state, a social state rather than a class state. Moreover, the quest for political freedoms had long formed part of the popular agenda. The 1881 program represents something between “*narodnik* socialism and social democracy.” Historically, it accomplished the tasks for which Serbia was mature: universal suffrage, freedom of expression and association and the introduction of a parliamentary system. All these were indispensable provisions that in the Western context had allowed social democracy to concentrate on its actual task, the economic liberation of the working class. It created an intermediate between “state socialism and a people's state.” The ideology of the Radicals remained, in essence, deeply collectivistic, regarding “the people” as a social and national collectivity. As emphasized by Latinka Perović, the ideology of the Radical Party in 1881 was “neither the ideology of a commercial, nor of an industrial bourgeoisie. It is populist ideology; its social substance is egalitarian.”⁹⁷ In the end, the Radical Party did “not do what it wanted, but what it could do: objectively it cleared the way for the development of capitalism, and turning from an oppositional to a ruling party, it also became carrier of this development.”⁹⁸

12. The Watershed

In essence, the 1880s were a crossroad in the development of the Radicals. It signaled their procedural willingness to compromise with the exigencies of surrounding realities as they moved slowly from political activism to power politics. The development of the party into a mass organization inevitably also entailed the increasing transfer of its focus towards the political sphere. Its distancing from the original program is not to be understood as a simple throwing-over-board ditching of principles, but rather as a process. It aimed to take into account, to the greatest extent possible, the changing aspects of Serbian society, aspects that through internal socio-economic development could no longer be sustained by a return to the original patriarchal institutions that were slowly disintegrating. After all, the Radicals understood themselves to be representatives of the peasant population.⁹⁹ The abandonment of collective land ownership was thus a concession to the Serbian peasant smallholder, who was more likely to embrace a program attacking the bureaucracy, excessive taxation and fat civil servant salaries than one of land collectivization. As Slobodan Jovanović argues, the new “peasant-demagogical formula” that was to develop in the later rhetoric of the Radicals was of an inferior intellectual quality, but in compensation, of greater political impact.¹⁰⁰ The development of the Radicals was as much procedural as dialectical in nature. In their quest for power and with the intention of conquering the state from within as a precondition in order to change its economic function, “the Radicals will make use of the peasantry also as a means. But in connection with these masses they will change themselves and compromise principle.”¹⁰¹ The ideology of the Radical Party was constructed on a pragmatic basis, combining elements of Western European socialism, Russian populism and Marxism, with the explicit aim of avoiding the Western path of social evolution. Political reform was the precondition in order to accomplish the two major impending tasks for Serbia: in terms of internal development to effect economic change, and in terms of external development to achieve unification. “Freedom is the means; equality is the

goal.”¹⁰² Political reform, particularly the reform of the constitution, was considered the means of confronting the monopolistic pretensions of the political elites and the Crown to political leadership. As claimed by Pašić in 1884, in a retrospective evaluation of radical policy:

[O]ur party came into being in 1869, when the Liberals betrayed liberal principles and created the current constitution, which brought such misfortune and removed power from the people and the ruler, placing it in the hands of some irresponsible ministry. As soon as the king used the choice of ministers to restore his influence and power, the people were deprived of any decisive influence over the organization of their state and foreign and domestic policy ... We directed our main energies towards the changing of the constitution in order to create in our country the circumstances favorable for constitutional reform in the spirit of self-government. *The reform of the constitution was the means of seizing the political state from the hands of the king and the submissive, irresponsible—as regards the popular will—ministers, and entrusting it to the people, that is, basing [the state] on a solid, broad and permanent foundation. Dissociating popular politics from personal ambitions and individual bosses and by reforming it, it is subjected to the influence of popular traditions, aspirations and thought, which have always been supported by the whole of Serbdom, the Slavs and Orthodoxy.*¹⁰³

The orientation of the Radicals towards reform provoked tension within the socialist movement and would be contested by a group of Marković's adherents, headed by Mita Cenić, who dismissed the economic determinism of the Radicals and insisted on the moral, broadly human appeal of socialism. For Cenić, socialism was not the outcome of the relationships of production, but rather was the result of the dissemination of education and the strengthening of morals. In his eyes, the Radicals' gradualism and emphasis on the primacy of the economic over the political was a betrayal of the original doctrine. While the Radicals considered gradual political and economic reform as the appropriate means of creating the preconditions for socialism, the "Socialists" laid a claim to "pure socialism"; they insisted on revolutionary activity as the only true path to the attainment of the socialist ideal. Whereas the Radicals, despite laying a monopolistic claim to both theory and practice, tended de facto to divorce theory from practice and showed a pragmatic attitude towards politics, by distinguishing between minimum and maximum goals and by prioritizing the exigencies of temporal circumstances, the Socialists insisted on the absolute indivisibility of theory and practice.¹⁰⁴

The Radicals, leaning on reformatory social democracy and the evolutionary stream of Russian populism, declared the people to be the self-liberating subject of revolution and preached the necessity for long preparatory period towards the accomplishment of this goal. The Jacobin-Blanquist-oriented Socialists also considered revolution to be in the name of the people but to be led and materialized, however, by a revolutionary minority. From their voluntaristic perspective, revolution was possible everywhere and at any time. The radical/socialist confrontation thus seems to have preempted the great dilemma that would confront the socialist movement throughout the twentieth century. Which way should the movement proceed in materializing the ideal of an equitable society: through reform or revolution?¹⁰⁵ While both factions envisioned a popular state as the end goal, they attributed different functions to it. The Radicals envisioned a society developing towards communal property, while the Socialists wished to maintain the patriarchal institutions that guaranteed collective ownership.¹⁰⁶ The Radicals responded to the Socialists' challenge by drawing upon the arsenal of Marxist argumentation and legitimizing their political course on the grounds of Serbia's underdevelopment. The development of the forces and the relationships of production were the key to the development of society; consequently, what could the task of socialism be in a country "at the level of Asiatic culture"?

*The development and organization of production without class conflict will be the foundation of the material independence and the broad democratic basis of the state. A new free society is absolutely impossible without material independence ... But the material basis of society—a developed production system and the accumulated means of labor—do not fall from the sky ... This can only be achieved through associated, socialized labor. Thus, socialism in Serbia also has to effect economic change and, along with this, the transformation of the whole of society. But this change in Serbia means the development of production, the elimination of our poverty and primitiveness, and isolation in labor, through the help of associated labor ... The party that seeks these goals is in its essence socialist.*¹⁰⁷

Searching for an intermediate third way, the Radicals did not repudiate the skipping-phases formula, nor did they unconditionally endorse a universally valid formula for the development of capitalism as the only path to achieve economic growth. Theoretically, they moved between the two options: the necessity to develop and augment productivity but

without class antagonism. Cenić never materialized the socialist party that he planned, and both his influence and following diminished over time. This could be taken as a further indicator of the realistic chances of success offered by his narrowly conceived revolutionary activity. On the contrary, by transforming the people into their political subject the Radicals paved the way to their political domination.

13. A Church and an Army

The radical program appeared in January 1881, while the Radical Party was officially founded a year later, in July 1882. The Radicals proved to be the most innovative, modern and effective group in the field of practical political organization. They were pioneering in two concrete and unprecedented ways for Serbian politics. In the first place, they built a modern party machinery, a pyramidal organization, hierarchically operative and strictly disciplined. In the second, this same machinery allowed them not only to connect to the countryside, but most importantly to organize and mobilize it, a practice that no other political formation had ever attempted in Serbia. Similar organizational skills were demonstrated also by the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, and in both cases, despite significant ideological differences, the rational organization of peasant constituencies contributed, along with other equally significant factors, to the parties' success. The Radicals were the first party in Serbia to develop something that resembled a party network. Connecting the party nucleus with local party branches, this was meant to guarantee effectiveness in action, speed in mobilization, continuity in recruitment, discipline in political activity, and immediacy in the flow of information in both directions. The Radicals well understood the significance of political organization in a country with low social differentiation, composed of a majoritarian peasantry with few intermediate, possibly obstructive, social layers. They provided the peasant not only with a party card, but also with the dignity of a political subject, even if only of a rhetorical nature, for no peasant ever sat in the party's central decision-making body, the Main Committee (*Glavni odbor*), nor was the peasantry at any moment considered suitable to assume the reigns of political leadership.

The Radicals developed communicative skills of agitation and propaganda into an elaborate, proficient, and quasi-professional art both at the written and the oral level. Pera Todorović, certainly the most talented radical intellectual, characterized the rhetorical power of his writings as "fireworks that do not warm and that leave nothing after

them, but which for the moment sizzle, throw off brilliant sparks, and glow—and the world likes it, runs over, and looks.”¹⁰⁸ It was the same Todorović who, upon his return from exile in 1881, not only drew up the radical program, but also took to touring the land in order to bring the radical message to the localities. In his six-week “apostolic journey” around Serbia, he visited no less than 43 locations, propagandizing the party’s principles, helping to set up local organizations, and registering party members. Motivating the peasantry was not a process devoid of obstacles, since political involvement translated into a transgression of the power structure, an unfamiliar practice for the Serbian peasant, who under the “police state” of Mihailo and under the regime of Ristić had been educated to show deference towards, and not criticism of, authority. The paternalistic style of liberal politics inculcated “fear-respect” (*strahopoštovanje*) towards the government. For the peasantry, the Radicals’ invitation to participate in politics was a way of breaking out from political guardianship.¹⁰⁹ The Radicals differed from the Liberals and the Progressives not only in terms of ideology but also tactics. For the established political formations, politics was an arrangement among elites. The Radicals switched the rules of the political game when they threw in their lot with the people. In their confrontations both with King Milan and the political world they broadened their activity to the greatest extent possible, constructing the “people” and their demands as the sole legitimizing political source, and instrumentalizing the peasantry both as a lever and a weapon against the political *status quo*.

Fashioned on the prescriptions of Peter Lavrov, the Radical Party was conceived from its inception as a popular mass party to be led by a socialist nucleus, whereby the people would oppose power *en bloc*. If egalitarianism, however, was the essence of its discourse, this was not reflected in its structural edifice. The subordination of the members to the party structure, the subjection of the individual to the collectivity, a strong hierarchy, and internal iron discipline achieved a strong consolidation and unity in its ranks. From the beginning “the head was distinguished from the body.” The Main Committee and the local committees (*Mesni odbori*) constituted the strategic nucleus, guaranteeing control over party discourse and establishing internal discipline. Individual public statements on party policy were discouraged, as were divergences from the official party line without previous consultation

with a committee. To the degree that such activity could harm the party, expulsion was nearly automatic. The efficacy of the Radical Party derived as much from the monolithic party structure, as from the capacity to use the party as an efficacious instrument. An elaborate, tight and hierarchical party structure using various levels of organization (the main central, local, communal and district committees as well as party assemblies) allowed for supervision by the party authorities and representatives. All strings of this convoluted radical network seemed to end in the hands of the one man in charge, Nikola Pašić. Cemented by his charismatic personality and his leadership qualities, these were to guarantee his undisputed dominion over the party for decades.

The hierarchy and discipline governing the party's ranks gave the Radicals a structure resembling an army, and the exalted ideology they promulgated gave them the character of a religious order.¹¹⁰ Slobodan Jovanović claimed that radicalism "spread among the people like something of a political infection."¹¹¹ The party consciously inculcated the messianic notion of self-sacrifice. Being a Radical signified far more than simply embracing certain principles. The radical ethos prescribed fanatical faith in the party and sacrificial spirit to be directed against opponents, but also the carriers of foreign, hostile ideals (Western values). In order to prevail in what was understood to be a major cultural countdown, *Samouprava* claimed that "history constantly demonstrates one incontestable truth. In the cultural struggle with other peoples/nationalities, only those peoples who possess an adequate number of conscious, brave and all-sacrificing members can survive."¹¹² Strong emphasis was put on the feeling of reciprocity among members striving for the common cause. If, in the process of party struggle, party members suffered losses, they were to be offered assistance by their local committees,¹¹³ while the first party congress officially institutionalized a "Fund for the Assistance of Repressed Radicals." The Radicals were a party animated by a spirit and a mission, with strong pretensions to monopoly, characterized by "sectarianism, exclusivity, intransigence" and a political philosophy subordinating means to ends.¹¹⁴ They would pursue politics with the fervor of religious fanatics until the turning point of the 1883 Timok Rebellion (*Timočka Buna*).

Characteristic of the party was its mass character. Pera Todorović testifies that in 1883 the Radicals had around 60,000 registered and an equivalent number of unregistered members.¹¹⁵ In the final years of

the nineteenth century, when it was most popular with peasants, local petty merchants, artisans, priests and teachers, the Radical Party had a particularly strong following in Eastern Serbia. The party's political geography reveals that it received strong support from the poorest peasant strata.¹¹⁶

14. Slavophilism

Basic philosophical assumptions of slavophile doctrine were incorporated almost *a priori* into the Radicals' social philosophy, informing their worldview on a variety of issues, like the relationship between societal organization and the individual, or the place of Serbia within the realm of world civilizations. Historically, the bridging of slavophile ideas and the ideas of Westernizers in Russia was achieved in the synthetic thought of Alexander Herzen. Via this modality slavophilic themes were to influence the development of populist doctrine. Moreover, they were modified and reorganized theoretically into a different ideological system. Despite the fact that slavophilism and populism developed into two distinct ideologies, they intersected ideologically at several points, as both were based on a similar axiomatic foundation. Both nurtured an abhorrence of the Western liberal-capitalistic variant of progress and the broader model of European civilization. Some of the fundamental building blocks of *narodnik* ideology, like the destruction of the traditional mode of life by the forces of capitalism and the potentiality of traditional institutions for the creation of a just social order, emanated from a similar starting point. With respect to the belief in a particular path for Russia, the *narodniks* were true descendants of the slavophiles, albeit not sharing their mystical faith in the particularity of the Russian people.¹¹⁷ Equally influential was the slavophiles' organic view of social evolution as opposed to what they understood to be the formalistic, mechanical and ultimately alien social development of Western society.

Slavophilic proclivities are clearly present in the thought of Svetozar Marković. In his quest for an original Serbian civilization, his evaluation of the Slavic and Western European civilizations and the taxonomic classification of Serbia as clearly belonging to the first type, his aversion to the formalistic character of the judicial system compared to the superiority of the internalized morality of the community, his vision of an organic and holistic personality, and his unitary vision of society, or better stated, his preference for the "organic community" over the

“contractual society,” Marković incorporated elements of the social critique and the civilizational analysis of slavophilism, omitting its theological foundations. Marković’s religion remained science. Further elements of slavophilism like the drama of the clash of civilizations, the superiority of the Orthodox religion as an institution (church) and a creed, and the belief in the benevolent influence of the Russian Tsar were developed, accentuated, systematized and enriched with pan-Slavistic elements¹¹⁸ in the thought of Nikola Pašić, particularly during his period in exile after the collapse of the Timok Rebellion.

The slavophiles’ social philosophy deserves closer elaboration, for it provides a key to understanding the fundamental difference between their organic vision of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and the contractual, formally institutionalized *Gesellschaft* (society). It also provides a key to understanding what appears to be the major paradox of radical doctrine: the quest for constitutional rule in combination with an anti-liberal social philosophy. In their social critique, the slavophiles repudiated a vision of “society” designed to function as the institutionalized arena of confrontation and negotiation of diverse interests, upholding rather a concept of “human association,” best represented in the consensual community of superior internalized morality.

According to Ivan Kereevsky, the fact that Russia had evaded the impact of the rationalism of Roman civilization, embodied in the formalized system of Roman law, constituted the fundamental difference between Russia and Western Europe, and represented a clear advantage for the development of Russia. The internal disintegration and atomization of Western society was expressed in a system of external, and entirely formal bonds based on compulsion. Seminal to the slavophiles’ philosophy of history was the belief that religion had a catalytic influence on the development of the particular character of each civilization and culture. According to the theologian Aleksey Khomyakov, “true Christianity” was “not an institution, not a doctrine,” but a “supraindividual spiritual togetherness,” which he defined as “*sobornost*,” the “living organism of truth and love,” and which presupposed rejection of the autonomy of individual reason. The primary reason for the disintegration of Western Christianity lay in its incorporation of the rationality of Ancient Rome, culminating in “atheism and the apotheosis of egoism, which formed the spiritual foundation of modern rational and industrial European civilization.”¹¹⁹

Perceived as sequences of one and the same historical process, the increasing rationalization of the Western churches, the secularizing effect of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, modern industrialism, and finally "social contract" theory, signaled the "triumph of calculating rationalism" and "brought about the necessity of contractual relationships and the cold, depersonalized rule of formal law." pre-Petrine Russia represented a different type of social development, since Russian Orthodoxy had not been infected by Western rationalism and had thus retained Christian teachings in all their purity.¹²⁰ As far as political philosophy was concerned, Konstantin Aksakov emphasized the superiority of the principle of self-government over republican rule. Whereas the first was based on the principles of unanimity and accord, the second was founded on the premise of total struggle among humans, who were in the end subordinated to the rule of the mechanical legal minority. Whereas republican society was atomized, in the Russian *mir* individuals were fully socialized in "free unity," "based on the common beliefs and customs that regulate the behavior of the individual *from within*, and hence there is no need to resort to external compulsion." The Westernizing activity of Peter the Great ("revolutionary rationalism in action") was a betrayal of the principles of communal life, which were, however, still preserved by the common people, in their Orthodox faith and the institution of the *mir*.¹²¹ These were to furnish Russia with the legacies necessary to avoid the dismal fate of Western Europe. As observed by Andrzej Walicki, the slavophile analysis of the antithesis between Russia and Europe as two distinct societal types corresponds to F. Tönnies' typology of the contraposition between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and is indicative of the broader preoccupation of European thought with the heritage of the Enlightenment and the problem of the rationalization of social life.¹²²

The Serbian-Croatian Accord is one of Pašić's most programmatic texts. It is interesting because it brings together several interrelated themes that made for his long-lasting *Weltanschauung*. It touches upon his general, quasi-theoretical understanding of the position of small nations in the contemporary world, and his concept of international politics as a multidimensional (political, economic, cultural) field of power conflict, but, most importantly, it reveals his own deep-seated ideological views about East-West differences, and the position of Serbia relative to these two civilizational poles. Pašić was very apprehensive about

the fate of small states in competition with big ones, "since the course of contemporary European culture forces nations to create larger states, as a means to survive, not so much in warfare, as in cultural and economic competition." If, once upon a time, the small Greek republics could attain high culture and progress, the standards of his times made such a thing impossible. That is, it was impossible "to maintain small states at the peak of culture and progress in the competition with big states." The struggle for survival between small and big states was unequal "since the struggle of commercial and industrial interests is more inhuman than many of the barbaric struggles that preceded them."¹²³ Now that modern industrial civilization was turning "the world into one house," great dangers lurked for small nations, particularly for those "bordering big states."¹²⁴ Contemporary European culture with its "industrial-railway production and transport crushes small states and nationalities and threatens them with ruination ..."¹²⁵

Discussing the possibility of union between the Serbs and Croats, Pašić denied the Croats the right to lead the union's efforts, on the grounds of their specific historical development ("they sold out their sovereign rights to foreign states and churches" in succumbing to Austrian domination and taking up Catholicism). Their submission to "the cunning West" made them unfit to create a state in the true "spirit of the Slavic people" and "in accordance with the spirit of civilization." It was wrong, he argued, to consider religion a minor factor in the development of the national question:

Faith influenced and influences the culture of every nation and vice versa. The character of a nation influences its faith, its actions and applications, which are closely related to the morals, feelings and predisposition of every nation ... Thus the form, development and strength of a state is influenced by faith, that is, religion influences the united tribes and the way in which union is completed ... The only reason why Catholicism could not defeat the Eastern Church was because its bearers were Slavs. The Slavic character, ... where it was strong, retained Orthodoxy in its purity. That means that the Slavic spirit, character and qualities ... are related to Orthodoxy. In other words, Orthodoxy is the Christian faith which is in agreement with the pure soul, heart and character of the Slavic people—the Slavic qualities.¹²⁶

For Pašić, Eastern and Western Europe were "two separate worlds," two types of civilization, in perennial struggle not only over confessional issues, but also over the more generic issues of the "economic and politi-

cal organization of the nation." Western and Eastern Europe were "two worlds in an uninterrupted cultural, confessional, national and economic struggle. The Byzantine fought with the Roman Empire, then the Western Christian church with the Eastern, so that the contradictions inherent in the customs of these people split Christian science, which teaches brotherly patience, accord and love; the West fought with Islam, and when it was weakened and curbed by Russia, [which] restarted the struggle with the West, so that the Eastern legacy remained with the Orthodox people in the East. From the times they appeared in the lands they inhabit currently, the Serbian people, in the struggle between the Eastern and the Western world, have always been on the side of the East."¹²⁷

According to Pašić, the East–West dichotomy preempted the adaptation of Christianity, while preexisting differences (customs, temperament, worldview, society), cemented the distinctive ways in which one and the same Christian doctrine was adjusted. The superiority of the Eastern Church was attested through its conciliatory (*saborna crkva*), popular ("grew organically with the soul of the people"), and democratic character, as against the hierarchical, expansionist and "absolutistic" Catholic Church, which adhered to papal infallibility. Moreover, the constitutive values of the Eastern Church rendered it particularly suited to follow the newest inventions and keep up with the more general scientific progress of modern times. The Eastern Church had preserved the Slavic qualities of the people, "traits and customs, which are ideal for accepting the results of contemporary progress and will carry them to heights as yet unimaginable by humanity."¹²⁸

However, in Pašić's understanding, the Slavic world was not only a wholly different universe in cultural, civilizational or confessional terms; it was also a model of a wholly different socio-economic order, distinct from, alternative and superior to Western bourgeois society, and ultimately destined to create a new world humanity. In this new world arrangement, Serbia was to follow second only after the foregoer Russia, with which it shared multiple affinities:

The *obština* (community) is the soul of the Slavic world. It is the beginning, and is postulated today by contemporary social science as the last level of organization of contemporary European society. It is thus both the beginning of Slavic society and the end [final stage] of Western European social development. However, the Slavic community as a primary unit

is capable of further development, ... while on the contrary the Western community signifies the end, and in fact will be the cultural end that will unavoidably terminate the contemporary bourgeois order ... The Western states were founded with the help of the sword and naked violence, and developed on the basis of struggle and competition, bringing society to a [fateful] condition and division. The community is the sole exit from this colossal mechanism and pressure. Only in the community can peace, welfare and progress be found. The Slavic state and especially Russia, the purest Slavic representative, begin their development with the community—with a new unit, a new foundation, on the basis of which the edifice of a new Slavic culture can be built, which will encompass humanity—which will create a proper and pure Christian science, where all people and nations will be brothers and will bring “peace” to the world state ... The Serbian *zadruga* is the social institution closest to Slavdom, the Russian *obština* and the Russian *mir*. Behind the Serbian *zadruga* is the Serbian *obština*, which never abandoned the desire for its own “communal self-government,” and which still possesses enough communal land, belonging to the whole community, for all its members. The Serbian *zadruga* thus is closest to the Russian *mir* ... These [Slavic] qualities, along with some others belonging only of the Serbian people, suffice in order for the Serbian people to participate in the next great tasks of Slavo-Russian society. They suffice to preserve the Serbian people from Western pressure, and give them a vigorous life and inspiration ...¹²⁹

The Slavic elements of social organization that only the Serbs had managed to preserve thus nominated them as the rightful representatives of Slavdom in the south. The consciousness of the Serbian people had allowed them to liberate and erect their state by themselves, establish the unalienable right of popular sovereignty, which made Serbia a “fully democratic state, such as no other existing in Europe apart from Switzerland.” The people, as the highest authority, represented the best guarantee that political life would not digress, but would remain rooted in the national-popular traditions. For Pašić, as for Marković, the egalitarianism of Serbian social structures was the best testimony of the democratic disposition of the Serbian state:

A comparison between a democratic state like Serbia and a state which is founded and ruled by classes, the aristocracy, the clergy and later the bourgeoisie immediately demonstrates vast differences. A state where all citizens are equal and have equal rights, in which there exists neither an aristocracy nor consolidated classes, nor big landowners (*spahiluka*) and, as yet, no powerful and numerous bourgeoisie, is a state which is in ac-

cord with the dignity and decency of every citizen, every human being. There life is more pleasant; the state is closer to heart. Every citizen feels himself to be a master and not a slave or some kind of lower creature in the state, where authority lies with the aristocracy and the big landowners designated by birth, and not in the hands of the most competent and honorable citizens. Serbia is a true democratic state.¹³⁰

The processes that Pašić understood to be a major threat to the cultural and material survival of small states were not circumstances limited to Serbia. During his exile in Bulgaria (after the frustration of the Timok Rebellion) he observed similar “dangers” in neighboring Bulgaria, too. “The influence of Western Europe is not confined to the Serbian borders ... Moreover, the same personalities and the intermediaries that labored in Belgrade came here, too.” Pašić criticized Western society principally from an ethical standpoint, but in his reasoning the ethical, political, social and national considerations were interconnected.

Western society raises money above everything: above honesty, work, morals, and all the goodness and virtue that strengthen and upgrade society. Empowered in such a manner and in various ways, it offers money to the merchant, speculator, artisan, peasant and civil servant, by bringing into their view the pleasures and the commodities created by the West. It devises, creates and demonstrates to them various ways to enrich themselves at the expense of the simple people and the economic independence of the State. Various capitalists, bankers, industrialists have come and they search and find Bulgarians to create various financial-economic and industrial enterprises. They show them how millions flow, fast and effortless.¹³¹

The West, in its expansionist drive, sought the economic subjugation of the small Balkan nations. However, economic subjugation simultaneously meant political subjugation. In addition, by encouraging social differentiation, the West bred corruption and initiated the process which, in the long run, led inevitably to the loss of endemic national traits. For Pašić, Russia was to be appreciated not only as an alternative source of civilization; through its antagonism to Vienna it was the only power able to neutralize and repel the economic and political effects of Western culture (the encroachment of Austria-Hungary) and act as guarantor of Serbian independence. In his reasoning, the external, pro-Russian orientation of Serbia and the internal organization of the Serbian state (along the lines of popular Serbian and not foreign Western institutions) were closely interconnected.¹³²

15. To the People

Agitation was not exactly a new craft for the Radicals. The “Red Banner” affair (1875) and the concomitant trial a year later had given a first taste of the Radicals’ capacity to move public opinion and mobilize the population. The “Red Banner” protest was triggered by a vote of no confidence against the majority radical city council of Kragujevac. Representing the first important and impressive radical victory at local level, the council had been fairly elected in accordance with electoral procedures. This victory was contested, however, by a group of citizens associated with the liberal and the progressive opposition. Through a public meeting and vote, the Radicals managed to demonstrate their supremacy, a circumstance that was celebrated by a crowd of 300 people, who, singing “La Marseillaise,” marched through the city behind a red flag emblazoned with the term “self-management.” News of the march spread, creating a tradition for the Radicals, as did the trial that followed. For the rest of the political world, including King Milan, it became a signal of the revolutionary potential of the Radicals, who they perceived as some kind of local *sans-culottes*.

The success of the Radicals in the 1880s was to be based on the circular logic intrinsic to the notion of mobilization: “convince the masses of your program, and then argue that you are legitimate because your program represents the masses.”¹³³ Between 1881 and 1883 the Radicals embarked on a quest for power, consciously putting into practice the most tactical weapon of the populist doctrine: they went to the people, engaging in extensive and unprecedented agitational tours throughout the country, mass party assemblies, ferocious obstructionist polemics in the *Skupština*, and demagogical campaigns of rhetoric and libel in the press: pursuing “pathos as ideology,”¹³⁴ the Radicals cultivated an oppositional mood by instrumentalizing every failure of the government, defaming all its political and economic measures, exposing all its deficiencies, alternately constructing and organizing the people as a united front against authority, in which they demarcated the lines between “us” and “them” in an atmosphere that

resembled the conditions of a civil war. The fruits of this impressive strategy were reaped in the *Timočka Buna* (1883), the last great peasant revolt of Serbia, and a turning point in the history of the Radicals themselves.

In the mounting confrontation between 1881 and 1883 the Radicals played out their whole arsenal of “revolutionary” means, and, while opting for the legal path, they did not exclude more radical scenarios. In fact, the “conscription” of the population obeyed both the logic of electoral confrontation and of a popular “reserve army.” The radical discourse acquired a populist demagogical flavor as they pondered increasingly on the language of mobilization, demonstrating their capacity to adapt to the language and mentality of the peasant population. Appropriating the peasant’s idiom, the Radicals simplified and rendered comprehensible abstract political concepts, educating the peasant in a rudimentary political philosophy, while simultaneously turning the peasant against authority. They declared some kind of agrarian democracy, whose social contents were both collectivistic and egalitarian, since it implied a society without classes, organized on the basis of community work; ultimately a protective state personifying collective interests and volition. The following definition of self-government, as provided by Pera Todorović, is noteworthy:

Communal self-government is the following kind of order: the people themselves determine the amount of taxes they have to pay. The community itself determines the level of the salary to be given to its civil servant. Moreover, the community itself appoints and removes all its civil servants. With such an arrangement, there will be fewer civil servants than we have now. Done, brothers! One or two people and that’s all. Should the community deem it necessary, it can itself hire a priest, teacher, engineer, doctor, or whoever. They receive their salary from the community and the peasants can control and make sure that they do their job well. If not, off with him. “We won’t have you, brother. You are not useful to us, so go!” we shout and the work is done. No here and there, and asking the minister, the state official and every devil. Where true self-government rules, there are no bosses, who, ignorant of the difficulties of finding liquid cash, shout constantly: “give money, give money.” At present the civil servants receive their salaries from the state treasury, and the minister appoints and removes them. As far as we are concerned, they do not even want to know of our existence. For this reason, the civil servants humiliate us peasants, while we, brothers, can do nothing to them. We can neither remove their salary, nor drive them out of service; nothing. Everything today is done by

the ministers. For this reason the civil servants act according to the will of the ministers, and do not even want to hear about the people.¹³⁵

Pera Todorović, a leading figure in the agitational campaign, brought the message of the party to the countryside. Slobodan Jovanović has pointed to his elaborate language, his rhetorical qualities and capacity to transgress linguistic norms. “It was rather like listening to some kind of peasant chatterbox and not a city journalist who never appeared on the Belgrade streets without his gloves.”¹³⁶ At the first radical assembly in Kragujevac, attended by about 600 people, Todorović explained the radical program. Speaking on the issue of political rights, and referring to suffrage, Todorović castigated the discriminatory character of the state, which while demanding maximum sacrifice both in material and human terms, deprived the poor of their political rights and direct participation in state affairs, and thus ultimately of the recognition and dignity they deserved:

Let us now look at this point where it is mentioned that all adult Serbian citizens have the right to vote. This is an important issue, brothers. You know how we elect the village mayors. It is demanded that one pays the full *danak*, the head tax, just in order to be able to elect the village mayor ... In our country, there are people who measure human dignity according to the purse, even in the afterlife. The bigger your purse, the bigger your rights. He who has no property has no rights. But he has obligations. When it is time to go to the frontier nobody claims that as you are a poor chap, have no rights in the community and could not vote, that you now sit at home as there is no need for you to go to the battlefield. In this case, no matter whether you are rich or poor—[the order is] march! The absolutely destitute are put in the front line; as for the rich their turn comes afterwards, if at all. (Exclamations: By God, that’s how it is) ... The head of a human being is a heavy price, for as it’s well known, we possess only one. Whoever gives his head for the fatherland—he gives a lot ... There can never be justice and progress in a state where a citizen’s civil rights are measured according to the criterion of *affluence*. Participation in state affairs cannot be measured by the depth of one’s purse. The rich exist and survive through the state, while the [voice of the] poor is never heard and [he] has to starve. To prevent the poor from participation in state affairs, only because they are poor, equates to choking the voice of those who experience the weight of unpleasant state institutions and therefore have the maximum interest in the amelioration of everything that in a state is burdensome and hard for the people—it involves choking the voice of

those who, by nature of their situation, are forced to be the promoters of a benevolent social transformation and progress. The Radical Party won't have this. The Radical Party claims: precisely because you are poor, you have a right, and three times more so, to get involved in the doings of the state. Precisely because I am poor and have a weak spine, the more I feel and suffer under every state burden and injustice, loaded on my naked and lean shoulders ... Civil rights are not some kind of sausage (*pastrma*) sold by the state for 20 pennies, so that the one who pays more can slice off a bigger piece.¹³⁷

In radical discourse, social problems like the dimension of poverty were equated to ethnic properties, fusing the notions of popular freedom and sovereignty with that of the nation. Who was a true Serb? The parasitic and privileged bureaucrat, or the toiling and blood-sweating peasant? By such means the egalitarian aspirations and the patriarchal value system of the peasantry were formalized as the yardstick of authenticity, and the ultimate and determinate criterion of who had the right to define the content and the function of the state. The result was the organic connection of the social and the national dimension, that is, social egalitarianism translated as national appurtenance, and vice versa. The veritable and uncorrupted Serbian nation was the peasant nation, the nation of the poor. This primordial authenticity alone bestowed the "wretched" with the unalienable right to popular rule and sovereignty over the state of the rich and privileged. The semantic ambivalence of the word "*narod*" (the people as a social category—the sovereign people/the people as an ethnic category—the national body) was overcome in the vocabulary and the philosophy of the Radicals. *Narod* was unified in an unalienable whole, while the balance of meaning progressively came to favor the national over the social definition. The party's profile was declared programmatically in *Samouprava*:

We have neither leaders nor chiefs ... Our command is our fraternal compact and agreement. And our army? All those who suffer and endure ... Our inexhaustible reserve is the entire impoverished Serbian nation, all those who wear the peasant jacket and sandals, all those poor on whom the rich impose the *danak* and onto which the rich offload the burdens of the state from themselves, all those thirsting for justice and enlightenment, all the humiliated and fleeced. Before the eyes of this isolated mass still hangs the black veil of darkness and ignorance, but we will tear it off, and they will be with us.¹³⁸

The invocations to the “peasant jacket and sandals” (*Gunjak i Opanak*) increasingly gained ground and constantly reaffirmed the patriarchal value system in a dialectical relationship and as a vicious circle. Patriarchalism and the restoration of customary authoritative tradition were ritualized and acquired an enormous symbolic power as they were played against the established political authority and its modernizing schemes. The functionality of such populist mobilization is twofold: practical and polemical. It facilitated integration by stressing continuity but also served as differentiation against the opponent. Patriarchalism became a valid political standpoint and ultimately a political ideology, to the point of abuse. The appeal to the common man’s logic, the glorification of him and his pains, his designation as the true creator of the Serbian state and the only subject entitled to a say in the running of his affairs—all these elements had already formed part of radical discourse and philosophy. However, they were now developed into proper rhetorical topoi, stylized, codified and subdued to the purpose of demagoguery. The new element added to this emotional populism was an emotional nationalism.

It was, in fact, a step away from Marković’s socialism, but not a step too far from the structural ambiguities inherent in the populist doctrine. The quest for a different and original path, an indigenous culture and civilization; latent xenophobic proclivities and the fear of the encroachment of “higher” and more powerful cultures and states upon Serbia, and the subsequent loss of identity proper; the psychological drive for compensation; the acknowledgement of peripheral status; the agony involved in catching up with the rest of the world; the idealization of indigenous institutions; the holistic quasi-metaphysical treatment of the “people,” and finally an ideological concoction combining both elements of utopia and nostalgia—all were ingredients that contained a two-fold potentiality. Not by chance, they constitute also basic building blocks of nationalist ideology, in which the initial defensive national response is transformed into an assertive nationalistic vision. Additionally, an increased leaning on nationalism may be observed in populist mobilizations aiming at establishing legitimacy, in an attempt “to revitalize integration on the basis of ‘traditional’ values.”¹³⁹ Mobilizing “the people” formed part of the political struggle, whereby the fictive concoction of the people as a consensual entity aimed rather at their activation than at their actual participation.¹⁴⁰ The impressions

and the evaluation of King Milan as one of the Radicals' principal adversaries are noteworthy. They offer an insight both into the rationale of the King, but they also verify the effectiveness of radical propaganda. Last but not least, they tend to confirm that the confrontation between the two opponents was a fatal race between two different philosophies of state to decide who ultimately had the prerogative to rule:

The first thing that I noticed was the common trait of all Radicals to radically flirt with the masses, the mob. All Radicals of rank, educated or simple, stupid or clever, old or young, rural or urban; all, all of rank, hypocritically or flatteringly, everywhere; they bowed to the people, the sovereign people, like some kind of imagined monster, which like that wooden Chinese god squats and waits for sacrificial offerings. In the mouths of the Radicals the Serbian peasant was the only proper representative of the Serbian people. And this peasant, in the hypocritical thought of our Radicals, was the source of all goodness, grandeur, courage, intellect, glory and happiness for the whole Serbian race. The peasant has to be given all power; he has to be elevated to the status of sole decisive ruler in the whole land—and then, lucky Serbia, ... milk and honey will flow! Already these initial traits of the Radicals were repulsive to me ... In the first moment I did not know what to think properly of these people, who had spent five or six years abroad and studied in various universities; people who know what a state is and how a state has to be managed, and who publicly preach that the people are the source and mouthpiece of power and that all power in the country has to be given to the peasant, and only then the country will begin to sing. Yes, in the first instance, I did not know what to make of such people, and then I came to the conviction that they are simple speculators, who calculated with precision in order to seize power and the sympathy of the mass, by vulgarly and insolently flattering it.¹⁴¹

By promulgating a kind of “peasant state,” the Radicals achieved a higher degree of semantic congruence than their political predecessors, who employed the same political vocabulary but in a far more abstract and vague manner, failing thus to achieve mass identification. From the opposite end of the political spectrum, the Radicals succeeded in convincing the “peasant jacket and sandals” that they were the liberators of Serbia and the creators of the state, its source of productivity and legitimacy and the only and true carriers of the Serbian state.¹⁴² The Radicals managed not only to convince the peasantry that they were the authentic Serbian nation, but also that there existed an absolute identification of interests between the people's and the radical cause, of

which the spontaneous and righteous mouthpiece was the Radical Party. In the following text, from the principal rally of the Radical Party in Kragujevac in July 1882, N. Pašić equated in total terms the electoral victories of the Radicals with the victory of the people:

Brothers, it has been demonstrated by the history of human evolution that the states in which the people rule achieve the highest level of development. The states, where the people rule progress constantly, free of tribulations, always reach the highest level of wealth and education ... The history of evolution teaches that it is the people who must rule. But also the history of the creation of our state excludes any other [kind] of rule. Gunjac and Opanak created this land, erected and established everything that we possess today ... All that he has created [the peasant jacket and sandals] furnish him with the right to dispose of it as his property. All parties recognize this right. But the Radical Party wishes to revive this popular right, implement and install it in everything, across all the political and economic institutions, across the entire national life ... [Repeating it at least three times, Pašić then refers to the electoral victories of the Radicals with the expression, "*The people have won.*"]. [The radical opposition] sought that the people rule autonomously in their communities, that they be the sole master and give the state only as much as it is necessary. Our conviction is so bright, so pure, that in due time it will maintain victory.¹⁴³

16. Manipulating the Past

Radical discourse engaged in rhetoric as regards the Ottoman past. In their efforts to mobilize, the Radicals resolved upon a reassessment of the Ottoman past in a way very different from the sober tones of Marković's assessment of the Ottoman system in his *Serbia in the East*. In the latter's analysis, the Ottoman past figured in a fairly positive light and was credited at least with the retention of communal autonomy and the preservation of patriarchal community values. On the contrary, the Radicals instrumentalized the "Turkish past" by associating several of the government's policies and measures with the experience of Ottoman rule, insinuating the government's intention to subjugate the population anew. Pera Todorović, for example, in his eloquent journalistic polemics, baptized the gendarmes as "sejmeni," a reference to the enforcers of janissary rule in the Ottoman period. The purposeful construction of the common "yoke" experience and the deliberate use of allusions to the Ottoman past galvanized the political atmosphere and had an excitable effect upon public opinion. By constructing the Serbian peasant as a perennial freedom-loving and independence-inclined subject, the Radicals emphasized the self-directive role of the peasantry in the liberation struggle, founded firmly in the alleged natural proclivity of the Serbian peasant for equality, freedom and basic democracy. As the Serbian peasant had risen against the Ottomans and constructed his state on his own, nobody could take it away from him, much less so the bureaucratic state and its lackeys. By emphasizing "historical" right and the historically demonstrated aptitude of the peasant to rise against unjust authority, the Radicals perpetrated the image of the self-defending, armed peasant taking fate and justice into his own hands, thus consciously directing the popular mood against the state and the government.

The foremost example of this mobilization technique and its manipulative effects was the radical campaign against the disarming of the national militia in 1883. The governmental decision to collect weaponry was related to a general effort at military reorganization, whereby

a standing army was to be created and obsolete equipment replaced with more modern weaponry. The new arms, however, were not to be distributed among the population as in earlier times, but stored in magazines, which in popular translation equaled weapon confiscation. “Disarming the National Militia” was Pašić’s answer to the government directive to proceed with the collection of armaments. Published in *Samouprava* in July 1883, the text is interesting for several reasons. It is noteworthy not only for the nationalist rhetoric it radiates, the emotional reference to the Turkish past, and the romantic concoction of the Serbian peasant as the “eternal *hajduk*,” but also because the text purposely avoids any kind of reasoning related to the actual causes of the disarmament. In what could be considered a deliberate misinformation campaign, the article attributes the disarmament program to the government’s intention to procure additional income by selling the weaponry to Jewish merchants, “for a dinar or two, to those who laugh and make fun of the Serbian name, hero and freedom.”¹⁴⁴ Moreover, weapon confiscation was interpreted as a serious violation of popular sovereignty.

What is the rifle to the Serb? This we all know. It is his most essential weapon; it is as dear to him as his wife, brother or sister; the Serb can be easier separated from his head and soul than from his weapon. Without rifles and weapons there can be no freedom. If one wishes to destroy the freedom of a people and lead them to slavery, then you only need take their weapons away ... Was Serbian freedom resurrected so that the Serb—still alive—would agree to have his weapons removed from him? ... History demonstrates that while the Serb has easily agreed to endure the greatest pains, he has never agreed to have his weapons removed from him. Weapons were taken but never given away ...

As history teaches us: when the Turks could not achieve their goals through ordinary means, they resolved to violence. In order to find out where weapons were hidden, they usually beat human beings with a hundred or more blows. Flogging and crippling meant nothing to the Turks and often they beat up women ferociously [the article proceeds with a description of concrete tortures] ... Only think how the Serb will feel when his rifle is removed from the wall, the rifle with which he has shared fortune and misfortune in war; the rifle that was his comrade in the camp; the rifle with which he fought the enemies; the rifle that saved his life; the rifle with which he defended his children, family, fatherland; the rifle which every soldier intends to leave to his descendants as a cherished souvenir, as a pledge and testament from the last two hard and bloody wars ...

You have no reason, justification or excuse if you respect the sanctity of popular freedom. There can be only one reason: you are afraid of the armed people—for this reason you wish to remove [their weapons] from them, store them in warehouses and then sell them to the Jews, who will later on carry them out of the country ... But we cannot believe that there exists such a person in Serbia who intentionally wants to buy the weapons from the Serbs and turn warriors and heroes into Turkish *raja* ... We do not believe that there are people so insane to be capable and willing to make the Serbian people into a submissive *raja*, which the Turks tried in vain ...¹⁴⁵

17. Heading for Confrontation

The achievement of the Radical Party was bringing the masses into the political scene. Seeking out and politically organizing the peasantry by involving it in an elaborate party structure (consisting of party membership card and fees, local committees, regular party conventions, etc.) which acquired the dimensions of a nation-wide political organization, “the Radicals created the first political organization in the Balkans to give the term popular sovereignty a practical, visceral meaning.”¹⁴⁶ At the same, through their populism, they released mass instincts, which, in multiple ways, ran counter to the broader prospect of modernization.¹⁴⁷ From 1881 to 1883 the Radicals adopted an obstructionist, uncompromising policy under the premise of “the worse, the better” and made use of every means available to discredit their opponents, irrespective of the usefulness or not of their policies.

Faced with the bellicose disposition of King Milan, who mistrusted the Radical Party and its program of political reform as demagogical and revolutionary, and conscious of the unwillingness of the Progressives, their onetime allies, to concede to them any political power, the Radicals deployed a variegated register of oppositional tactics: legal struggle in the *Skupština* for constitutional change which would guarantee the sovereignty of popular representation and public struggle in the mobilization of public opinion. A series of chance events came to their assistance, or were purposely instrumentalized in their agitational campaign: the bankruptcy of the General Union, the company charged with the construction of the railway, a project that the Radicals had opposed from the very beginning, and the reluctance of the government not only to assume responsibility, but provide a public explanation, in the *Skupština*. The state salt monopoly was disliked by the population, and was turned by the Radicals into an anti-taxation campaign, whereby rumors were spread that more taxes were to follow on estate, livestock and property. Another event was the death in jail of two women affiliated with the Radicals (Ilka Marković, wife of Jevrem, brother of Svetozar, and Lena Knićanka). The resistance to the registration of

cattle, a regulation simply in compliance with Austrian veterinary requirements, was publicized by the Radicals as a new taxation measure. The royal disregard for the radical victory in a number of elections (May and December 1882, September 1883) and the measures for the disarming of the national militia together constituted the small stones that helped pile up the popular barricades of the Radicals. Persecution by their opponents only added to their fanatical zeal and contributed in enforcing their feelings of sectarianism, reciprocal solidarity and devotion to the party's cause. Additionally, persecution "only enhanced the view in the peasant mind that to be a real Serb, a rebel of the people, meant to be a Radical. Imprisonment and harassment by the state simply proved the genuineness of their claim to authenticity."¹⁴⁸

Through a conscious and often manipulative use of propaganda, the Radicals drove peasants towards a total rejection of the state authority, and their response did not lag behind in ardor, with peasants even rejecting state measures against the phyloxera epidemic. It appeared as if the country was split into a peasant and a bureaucratic Serbia, in the belligerent mood of a civil war.¹⁴⁹ Defaming the Progressives as "traitors," the Radicals obstructed all their policies, irrespective of their usefulness. Their foreign policy was anti-national—the Radicals strongly played on anti-Austrian rhetoric—, their internal policy was bureaucratic and anti-liberal, while their economic measures flung the country open to local and foreign plutocrats and worked against the national interests. Their system of indirect taxation exceeded the economic strength of the people; commercial agreements with foreign states, particularly Austria–Hungary led to the ruin of local crafts. While the Progressives were in control of the state apparatus and made full use of its disciplinary mechanism in order to discharge Radicals from positions of local authority, the Radicals carried behind them the support of the masses, disenchanted by the state.¹⁵⁰ Using various techniques, alongside the abovementioned demagogical approach, the Radicals succeeded in acquiring the faith of the public (for example by publishing police reports in *Samouprava*). The dissatisfaction of the population, and the repressive measures of the government, created the loaded atmosphere of the 1883 elections.

The struggle between the Radicals and the Progressives was ultimately a confrontation between the former and King Milan. Its roots lay in two diametrically opposed notions about the arrangement of the

state, relating to internal and external affairs, and two contending philosophies about who had the prerogative to rule. As Pašić explained, “the Serbs could be considered among the most unfortunate people in Europe.” King Milan was a “betrayers of the people that he is ruling. He has befriended himself with the Serbian peoples’ eternal enemy [Austria–Hungary], and together they are working for the ruin of the Serbian state and its subordination to Austria–Hungary.” Historical events had placed the Serbo-Croatian tribes between the barbaric Turks and the civilized Germans. Despite having fought against the Turks, Pašić continued, the Serbian people more deeply despised the civilized Germans, whose influence was far more catalytic and far-reaching than the influence of the Turks:

With the help of God and the Russians, the Turkish power was defeated and mastered, [but even worse] is the German insatiability, succumbing Serbia to even greater and more insidious tricks and ruses. It lured and bribed the Serbian King and he became her ally and defender, and he opened wide the doors of Serbia. At a time when the Serbian people need protection and defense against the German “expansion in the East” our King betrayed his people precisely like Vuk Branković in Kosovo, with the sole difference that the latter did so out of revenge and the former out of greediness. At a time when Russian help is most needed, when the Germans are recruiting from all sides allies against the Slavs, the King thunders against the Russians and embraces and affiliates with the Germans, our enemies and the enemies of the Slavs. The Serbian people have to hold out a struggle against Germanism ... [The Serbian people] struggle for all Slavs against the intrusion of the Germans into Slavic lands ... The Serbian people consider their struggle against King Milan to be the struggle of the Serbs for the protection of their fatherland, as the struggle of a Slavic tribe against Germanism and German preponderance, and consider that they do not only struggle for themselves, but also for the rest of the Slavs.¹⁵¹

As the Radicals broadened the confrontation, transforming it into a struggle between the king and the people, it became obvious that Milan lacked the charisma to convert this competition into a major political cleavage, a kind of “national schism” along the lines of that of inter-war Greece between King Constantine and Venizelos. Milan’s incapacity “to create a folk mythology around his person made it a great deal easier for the Radicals to attract peasants with their own version of the national myth ...”¹⁵² In the 1883 elections the Radicals put all their ef-

forts into a campaign for constitutional reform and the summoning of a Great National Assembly as the means to achieve it.

Everyone called radical in Serbia, everyone that believed in our orthodox radical faith, all had only one duty—to work tirelessly and to prepare most seriously for the decisive battle in the elections for the Great Assembly, where the Radical party, as a party, had either to win or die ...¹⁵³ In order to make the people more resilient in the struggle, we had to stir in them the hope of the Great National Assembly. And in fact, little by little, through propaganda and agitation, the world started believing in the Great National Assembly, like in the miracle man, who will heal everything with his ascendance. They saw in the Great National Assembly a new Messiah.¹⁵⁴

The Radicals won the elections but were ignored by King Milan, who nominated the liberal Nikola Hristić to head the government. The King's choice was unconstitutional, and in the Radicals' understanding signaled that he had set course for an absolutist monarchy. The three-year build up of political tensions was to explode in Eastern Serbia, a stronghold of the Radicals, as a result of the economic difficulties after the 1876 war, disagreement over the registration of cattle, and growing tension over the collection of weapons. The Radicals' cry to "protect yourself when those to whom you entrusted your protection do not protect you,"¹⁵⁵ did not go unheard, and erupted in a revolt, which due to its unorganized nature, the indecision of the Radical leadership, and the swift reaction of King Milan, was easily isolated, brought under control and finally crushed. The Timok Rebellion (*Timočka Buna*) marks a turning point not only in the history of the Radicals, but also in the balance between King Milan and the Radicals. "In the Timok Rebellion, the dual, in which both fed on each other's extremes—King Milan's absolutism and the Radical Party's populism—, measured their strengths, tested the limits of their activity in their in-between struggle and paid the price: directly, by retreating from their extremist demands; and in the long run through unavoidable compromise."¹⁵⁶ The Timok Rebellion physically split the Radical Party as a number of its members fled into exile abroad, the most prominent among them being N. Pašić, who was to remain abroad until 1889. 809 perpetrators of and participants in the rebellion, along with the party leaders who remained in the country, were put on trial: 94 were condemned to death, of whom 20 were executed immediately, one committed suicide, 63 were pardoned

and 10 fled. 567 were sent into forced labor, 68 imprisoned, 5 kept in detention and 75 released. The Timok Rebellion created a legacy of martyrdom and resistance, which became the Radical Party's most convincing political capital. It would seem that Milan had won that first round of the confrontation. Only two years after Timok, however, he would seek the cooperation of the Radicals—then the strongest party in the country—in order to minimize the blame he suffered for the country's defeat in the war with Bulgaria in 1885. In the short term the “armistice” between the Radicals and the King translated into the pardoning and the eventual liberation of the convicted radical leaders. In the long term, and due to the King's keenness to secure the dynastic succession for his son, Aleksander, it would lead to the 1888 constitution, which turned Serbia into a constitutional monarchy.

18. Constitutional Philosophy

The constitutional project of the Radicals is not only indicative of their political philosophy, but also reveals their Jacobite attitude towards power in more general terms. Far from having a conception of the institutionalized political game as “fair play,” the Radicals perceived of parliamentarism as a means for total domination. Whereas the 1869 constitution had subordinated the *Skupština* to the government, the Radicals sought a reversal of this relationship by elevating the *Skupština* to the highest authority and subordinating the executive to its prerogatives. The Radicals sought the total subordination of ministers to the rule of the parliament. An almighty *Skupština* was envisioned, in which all power, legislative and executive was concentrated, limiting the prerogatives of the Crown. This all-powerful unicameral *Skupština* would be elected through general suffrage and was to be the absolute and true representative of the peasant order.¹⁵⁷ Nikola Pašić’s definition of the constitutional state is most illustrative: “A constitutional state is a people’s home, which comes into effect and is founded through brotherly agreement.”¹⁵⁸

This excessive concentration of authority in the hands of the *Skupština*—as a legislative organ and expounder of legislation, controller of executive and upper judicial power, the appeal for a regular Great National Assembly—all these measures of quasi-plebeian nature, were, as observed by A. Šemjakin, “practically a negation of the classical principle of the division and independence of powers.”¹⁵⁹ The Radicals’ quest for the establishment of a proper parliamentary system in the 1880s (consisting of free elections, democratic freedoms, majoritarian governmental rule), was ultimately a disguise for an “absolutely non-parliamentary essence.” While the Radicals fought seemingly for the establishment of political pluralism, de facto they paved the way for their own domination. Having secured a quasi-monopoly over the electoral preferences of the peasantry, in a socially undifferentiated country like Serbia the Radicals’ insistence on the preeminence of the principle of popular sovereignty could not but signify the unconditional rule of one

party, representing the absolute majority of the people. "The broader the civil rights and the freer the elections, the greater the chances of absolute hegemony."¹⁶⁰

The 1888 constitution, although it did not correspond fully to radical expectations, went much further than any preceding reform in upgrading the role of the *Skupština*, which was given equal participation in the legislative process and also gained the right to take legislative initiatives. Furthermore, it gained the right to determine the budget, now completely dependent upon its acceptance. With the new constitution, the *Skupština* could supervise the work of the government and even vote out any government with which it was not in agreement. Altogether, the 1888 constitution strengthened the legislative over the executive. Moreover, it reduced the suffrage property requirement and strengthened the influence of the rural over the urban voters. It enforced the principle of the responsibility of ministers, weakened the role of the Council (*Savet*) and passed legislation establishing communal self-government and the organization of local communities. The Radicals would continue to show pragmatism and adaptability when it came to the choice of political system and the issue of parliamentarism. Whereas in opposition they had favored a solution giving greater prerogatives to the *Skupština* as a counterbalance to the Crown and the government, upon their coming to power and seeing their strength in the parliament wane in the course of time, the Radicals shifted in practice to the British, cabinet-based model. The new strategy was put into practice without effectuating a change of the constitution, and rested on a political logic that was exactly the inversion of the previous one; now the government was at the center of decision-making, while the parliament and the king had only minor political functions.¹⁶¹

Once in power (1889) the Radicals did not destroy the bureaucratic system they had fought against for so long. On the contrary, they subordinated the bureaucracy to their own party. Decentralization, the long-standing demand for self-government, was no longer a viable option for a party that was no longer a contender but a holder of power. As an alternative, the Radicals proposed the "centralism of the radical state apparatus,"¹⁶² installing their own adherents throughout the state administration and creating a de facto party state. As maintained by Slobodan Jovanović, the Radicals carried the practice of *partisanstvo* (cronyism or favoritism) much further than any other party be-

fore them. The Radicals appropriated all power for their adherents and were much more aggressive and systematic in conquering the state. This was partially considered an “act of justice” for the distress they had suffered through long years of loyalty; it was also motivated, however, by something more than simple partisan egoism.

It was party fanaticism that drove the Radicals ahead with the irresistible strength and the unshakable consequence of a mass collective instinct ... A strong sense of solidarity that distinguishes the adherents of a sect, their intolerance and exclusivity towards other parties, and of course their striving for ever greater expansion and conquest—all these traits were clearly discernible in the Radicals; for non-Radicals there was no space in the state except as second-class citizens. *The whole Radical Party ascended with the strength of a huge wave to the height of a ruling class.*¹⁶³

19. In Power

The basic building blocks of radical ideology already underwent changes in the 1880s. In Marković's design, the community was understood as a self-governing, socio-economic unit, guaranteeing economic self-sufficiency and effectiveness. Progressively, the community would come to be treated as a simple administrative unit within a centralized state, and it would later be institutionalized as such. In their economic philosophy, the Radicals underwent a significant mutation. As capitalistic relations became more pronounced and the patriarchal institutions that had served as the core of their doctrine disintegrated, the Radicals progressively abandoned the initial conception of skipping phases of development, and the principle of *zadruga* socialism, concentrating their efforts rather on transforming the character of the state as an equitable organizer of wealth. To the degree that capitalism prevailed, the Radicals as a ruling party also became carriers of this development. The succeeding generation of Radicals (Mihailo Vujić, Stevan Popović, Kosta Taušanović) would endorse the principle of economic nationalism, expressed through a protectionist economic policy aimed at boosting the national economy.¹⁶⁴ Despite these mutations, their rationale in its essence still carried the mark of the original radical preoccupations, in that it acknowledged the primitivism of the local economy, the status of dependency this carried, and the necessity to overcome it. The "new" radical economic philosophy was propelled by strong national-political considerations. The necessity to escape from the status of a purely agrarian, raw material-producing country by developing an indigenous processing industry, and the realization that Serbia's constant export of agrarian and import of ready-made commodities was making the country poorer, required an economic course that would allow for growth and the development of industry. Regarding the issues of economic and political independence to be intricately interconnected, the Radicals argued for the impossibility of retaining national freedom without economic independence.¹⁶⁵

Clearly, the most significant modification of the initial radical doctrine concerned the national question. Marković had postulated the indivisibility of Serbian national liberation and unification with the broader social question and had envisioned its solution within a federative Balkan entity. Despite the ambiguities in his federative conception—it is unclear whether he understood this federation to be an association of individuals or as a confederation of ethnic communities—Marković categorically renounced the ethnically homogenous nation-state. On the contrary, the later Radicals carried a nationalist vision of a strong, sovereign and enlarged Serbian state functioning as the Piedmont of the Balkans, and in their conception of national liberation and unification were closer to Garašanin's initial "Greater Serbia" project. Another long-term process—spread over several decades—would be the reconciliation of the Radicals with the monarchical idea. The political confrontation between the Radicals and the monarchy aimed at restricting to the minimum the political prerogatives of the Crown, a goal achieved effectively in 1903. Reconciliation, a process initiated after the Timok Rebellion, and which cost Pera Todorović his reputation, credibility and membership of the Radical Party, would gradually and eventually develop into a true identification of the Radicals with monarchism.

As observed by Gale Stokes, in "the absence of a working class, the Radicals made Serbia's producers, the peasants, the class basis of their program, and in the absence of a bourgeoisie, they turned their criticism on the state bureaucracy, which they considered the dominant class in Serbia."¹⁶⁶ Moreover, they were instrumental in reconciling the peasant with the state and the etatist idea, transforming the peasantry into a "state-carrying element." The Radicals frustrated the peasant's antagonistic relationship towards the state by taking over precisely the mechanism that was considered their instrument of oppression. As commented however by Slobodan Jovanović, the Radicals' Jacobinism also produced collateral effects, for "it is another question whether this partisanship that reconciled the peasant with the state did not at the same time weaken the state and the state idea."¹⁶⁷ In their effort to mobilize the population, the Radicals appropriated the notion of the nation and changed its content. Most significantly, they reached out for the peasants before the official educational system had inculcated in them the notion of a national subject. "Therefore, many peasants

learned their sense of what it meant to be a Serb from the Radicals. This association of nationalism and radicalism in the minds of many peasants gave the Radical Party a primacy in Serbian politics it never relinquished.”¹⁶⁸

The Radicals incorporated the countryside into the state by “nationalizing” the peasantry. In power, however, the Radicals barely went out of their way in order to ameliorate the lot of the peasants. Apart from reducing their tax burden in 1889 and imposing a progressive tax on merchant capital and civil servant salaries, the Radicals took no concrete measures to improve conditions in the countryside or raise agricultural productivity. Ironically, the Radicals politicized the peasantry in order to depoliticize it. Trotsky would claim that the Radicals “came to power through the course of events, combining the traditions of revolutionary demagogues with the responsibility of politicians of the bourgeois order.”¹⁶⁹ The powerful legacy and the political capital of the initial radical movement (*Timočka Buna*, the opposition to King Milan, etc.) played an important role in attaching diachronically the peasantry to the Radicals. So did the personification of the party during the leadership of Pašić. Nonetheless, in power the Radicals started to resemble the state class that they had evicted, and in later years, along with the early legacy, they would also make use of the state machinery and the economic dependency of the peasantry on financial institutions to influence electoral results.¹⁷⁰

The Radicals continued their political career building on the earlier legacy, employing a rhetoric that represented the Radical Party as the sole and authentic representative of native-popular interest and spirit, as a defender of the people against an abusive bureaucracy and king, as a bulwark against pernicious influences jeopardizing the Serbian state and essence, and as the mouthpiece of the pristine, free and inherently democratic spirit of the Serbian people. In the self-fashioning of the radical fraction, Serbian history was recodified and made congruent with the party’s history. As pointedly put by Pašić, all Serbian history from the Serbian Uprising (1804) was “the struggle of the popular Serbian spirit against the objectives and intentions of rulers and mighty individuals to arrange Serbia according to their plans, imported from abroad and in cooperation with foreign Western civilization.”¹⁷¹ The Radical party, representing the “popular spirit,” was the creator of everything worthwhile in Serbia, from the liberation to the establishment

of the constitution. It was fulfilling the historical mission of Serbia. The close connection between internal liberation and national unification remained a popular theme of the collectivistic ideology of the Radicals. They defined their politics as a vocation, urging that "internally Serbia become a free state, a democratic monarchy and its institutions an attracting force for the unredeemed Serbs and the Serbs under foreign rule ... Serbia was to become the Piedmont of the Balkan Slavs, the pole of freedom for the people of the Balkan Peninsula, the adversary of German influence, and the ally and friend of Slavdom in general and of Russia, its protector."¹⁷²

The relationship between the people, the national-popular spirit and the Radical Party was represented as absolutely organic, unpremeditated and reciprocal. The popular Serbian spirit had thus quasi-spontaneously created the Radical Party, "*the struggle of the national-popular spirit, which longs for freedom and popular self-government created in the people a party, which is strong and powerful, and which the bureaucratic government always opposed, obstructing it in all possible ways as to hinder the organization of its strength and might.*"¹⁷³ In a similar vein, Pašić declared that, "the Radical Party, inspired by the democratic spirit of our people, supported by contemporary social science and instructed by the historical past of our people, led the popular struggle to a brilliant victory."¹⁷⁴ At the same time, the argument worked the other way around as well. The Radical Party was not only the embodiment, but also the extension of the qualities of Serbdom, of "the Serbian genius, whose wings are broadened through the successes of the Radical Party."¹⁷⁵ A speech by Pašić, delivered in Smederevo in 1889, brings together several of the rhetorical topoi of the stylized radical pedigree, of the populist-demagogical-nationalist formula, that was to serve the purpose of political consumption in later years:

The struggle of the Serbian genius, which is discernable in unsurpassable national-popular creations and past historical accomplishments, the struggle of the national-popular spirit with the bureaucratic guardian system, ended with victory in the interest of the people. This struggle was hard, volatile and, unfortunately, at times bloody, yet inescapable, for it was [fought] in the name of national-popular progress ... The Serbian people never settled for institutions established without their consent and volition, since such institutions strangled the spirit and hindered enthusiasm, impeded popular development and progress according to the peo-

ple's capacities and strength ... The sublime quality of the Slavic character is that it never accepts the injustice and evils of the world, no matter how bad they may seem. This sublime moral quality, which appears to be most strongly developed among the Serbs, has safeguarded them in the course of many centuries from great grief and misfortune—from the cruel and unrestrained Turkish force ... to the traps and slyness of the West ... This quality of the Serbian people, which seeks justice, freedom and brotherhood, incessantly leads the Serbs in the struggle against tyranny and inspires them to boundless sacrifices and labor, and after a long struggle ... has created the new Serbian state, devoid of an aristocracy and big lords, [characterized] only by brotherhood and equality. Thus brothers, this boundless popular force, which survived the shrewdness of the Byzantine Empire, and the ferocious invasions of the Goths, Bulgarians, Tartars and Magyars, crushed the ferocious Turkish power and for thousands of years has strengthened the Serbian people through history—this sublime and powerful moral quality of our people could not be but stronger against these Serbian sons, who with their arrogance and shortsightedness, climbed to power thinking they could fool Serbia as they wished ... The spirit of the Serbian people, this genius that created these divine popular creations, admired by all peoples, scored a victory over the postulate that the people are minors and immature, to be ruled by irresponsible people.¹⁷⁶

By promulgating an ideology based on a plebeian democratic, egalitarian and collectivistic social vision, the Radicals turned radicalism into a form of popular religion, echoing the predisposition of the peasant masses. Their populism, “elevated the social ‘virtues’ of the patriarchal community to the rank of national ‘virtues,’ subordinating individual rights to the importance of national belonging,” as Diana Mishkova has observed.¹⁷⁷ At the same time, it should be emphasized that the social component of radical ideology—the vision of a classless society, the notion of a popular state, the quest for social justice and equality—left an equally long-lasting legacy among intellectuals, independent of the concrete politics of the Radicals.

20. Legacies of Radicalism

It was this legacy that the Independent Radicals would claim in their schismatic dissent in 1901. The split in the radical ranks was triggered by the Radical Party's willingness to accept the more regressive constitution imposed by Aleksander Obrenović in 1901. This acquiescence to compromise on the constitutional issue (the new constitution envisioned the creation of a second house, a senate), the abandonment of the demands for universal suffrage, self-government and a popular army, and the prospect of entering into coalition with the Progressives, were perceived as a betrayal of programmatic radicalism, and provoked the critique of a younger generation of radical intellectuals who demanded a return to the true principles of the party. Moreover, they rejected the burgeoning tendency to personify the Radical Party solemnly as Pašić's will.¹⁷⁸ In 1904, the dissident group organized into a separate political entity, designating themselves "Independent Radicals."

The "Independent Radicals" kept to the original program of 1881, indicative of the popularity and the echo that this retained as a programmatic document. In wrestling for a share of the radical legacy, the Independents were indicative of the organic bonds achieved between the party and the people and of the "proven efficacy of its legitimizing code."¹⁷⁹ Contrary to the Old Radicals, who drew their popularity from a canonized legacy, the Independents insisted on the necessity to demarcate the contours of the party within a modern ideological profile. Based on the "principles of radical democracy," the Independents sought "the comprehensive promotion and advancement of the Serbian people towards greater personal freedom, strengthened social morals, the dissemination of knowledge in all social strata, fuller economic and civil equality, so that the people may materialize their national and social ideals."

In "moral terms," this program translated into the necessity to educate the people towards "a higher public moral," the development of social and moral feelings and the intensification of social solidarity and its civil values. In "intellectual terms," it envisioned the broad-

est possible dissemination of knowledge, so that even the members of the weakest social classes could develop their intellectual capacities. The Independents also placed a greater emphasis on vocational education. In "political terms," they demanded the introduction of self-government throughout the state, universal suffrage, secret voting and a proportional electoral system, the guaranteeing of the freedom of the press and association, and the popular right to elect the civil servants. Finally, in "economic terms," they promulgated the need to develop and fortify the productive forces of the country, to ameliorate hygienic conditions and public health, to protect the peasantry, the workers and the weak social classes exposed to the process of economic development, while simultaneously strengthening local industry. Economic frugality in state expenses went hand in hand with the need to create the "best possible conditions for the full economic independence of the people and the state."¹⁸⁰ In foreign policy, the Independents demanded strong protection for the political and economic interests of the Serbian people and the state, the fostering of good neighboring relations, the political and economic union of the Balkan people under the premise of "the Balkans for the Balkan people," the fostering of the spirit of a Yugoslav union, and support for the unredeemed Serbs in order to unite the fragmented Serbian people.¹⁸¹

The Independents demanded radical change in the bureaucratic apparatus: the simplification of the administration, strict self-government, a people's army, the amelioration of conditions in agriculture and the creation of credit institutions for peasants, social legislation for workers, tax reform, free and equal elementary education (including the abolition of tuition fees), general universal suffrage and even more trenchant democratic measures like plebiscites.¹⁸² The core idea of the Independents' social program was the necessity for active state intervention in the regulation of social and economic relationships as a means of achieving greater social equality and solidarity. The Independents translated radical democracy "in the terms of the modern European left," understanding democracy not solely in political, but also in social terms. This was manifest in their quest for enforced social rights, whereby the state, through active participation, had the duty to intervene in the relationship between the social classes.¹⁸³ The following statement by Jovan M. Žujović is illustrative:

Radical democracy emphasizes the *principle of mutuality* or *solidarity* as one of the most important principles for the solution of many problems involving individuals, groups of citizens and peoples ... Every man is a debtor to both ancestors and contemporaries, and a creditor of posterity. The obligations of mutuality are most developed in a democratic society, because democracy gives the most freedom and the most assistance to every citizen to develop both his material and spiritual possibilities to the utmost. It puts an end to all privilege emanating from the superiority of position, force and capital; it supplies the poor and powerless with the legal means to maintain themselves and to improve their position; it dislikes the unbridled freedom of competition that usually ends with the victory of those who are stronger. In this respect radical democracy differs from liberal democracy, which carries the principle of the freedom of labor to its extreme consequence, that is, to the ruin of the workers who are weaker ... [Radical] democracy maintains that the state has the right and duty to interfere with some so-called private affairs if they have an influence on the fate of the community ... Our party wants social justice for each and all; it will not wait for some "social revolution" to impose it.¹⁸⁴

The Independents incorporated elements of the modern European civic left without repudiating the radical principles that the party had represented in the nineteenth century. Opinions diverged, however, within the party, as to what these principles stood for. While some understood continuity literally as the affirmation of the patriarchal value system (the state as a big *zadruga*, a negative relation to private ownership and modern civilization in general, etc.), many party intellectuals conceived of continuity more in terms of the retention of the more generic values of social justice and solidarity. For this group, radicalism had a double, complementary direction. Along with the state goals of supporting economic modernization, promoting education and cultural progress, they also demanded active state participation in the realm of social relationships, namely interventionist social legislation.¹⁸⁵ For example, Jovan Skerlić returned to the original legacy of radicalism in order to emphasize its primary social content and identified the essence of the radical doctrine in its "economic and social features."

Today in the whole world, and this is how it has to be in Serbia as well, politics have to be conducted on a social basis and in the direction of economic reforms. And when I say on a social basis and towards economic reforms, I am by no means thinking of one class ... I think that the whole politics of our country has to follow this new path, to protect the interests

of our producers, our broad strata, the peasants in the countryside, merchants, craftsmen and workers in the towns ... And when we come to talk of the social struggle starting to emerge in our country we shall not step forward as defenders of one class or another; we will not defend exclusively the interests of the worker or the special interests of the employers. Above the interests of the individual strata we will take care of the whole, the interests of the whole country. Between the two extreme struggling tendencies, one professing *social revolution* and the other stuck in *social reaction*, we are decidedly in favor of reasonable and reliable social progress.¹⁸⁶

Ideologically, the Independents strove to reconcile agrarian, patriarchal radicalism with a moderate socio-economic program. Intellectuals who had a strong leaning towards socialism claimed the values of pristine radical socialism such as solidarity and the notion of a popular state compatible with modern social democracy. The capacity to make radicalism compatible with other socialist paradigms is a further testimony to the social content of radical ideology. As claimed by Olga Popović-Obradović, similarities existed to the degree that both currents [Radicals and Independent Radicals] were based on

anti-individualism and driven by the idea of social justice. Their assumptions, however, were essentially different and provided for the mutual exclusion of the two concepts. The one presumed an agrarian and patriarchal society, the other a civic, modern one. The one was based on the ideas of economic equality and self-management, while the other presumed the existence (and retention) of a divided society and sought the equal protection of all social classes; the one thus excluded social classes, while the other actually presupposed them. In other words, the society anticipated by original Serbian radicalism was of the pre-modern type, while on the contrary, the concept of social democracy, which the independent leaders explicitly endorsed, assumed a modern, highly developed society.¹⁸⁷

The Old Radicals made no efforts to clarify their ideological profile, but leaned more heavily on what could be considered an abuse of the “historical capital” of the party. Beyond declamatory and rhetorical references to truthfulness to the original program, they relied increasingly on traditionalism. Characteristically, Jovan Skerlić declared: “We live today and are not concerned with what was once ... And you, gentlemen, are very mistaken in one more issue. You think that in Serbia it is possible to survive politically by referring incessantly to the reminis-

cences of the past, constantly citing the struggles and services of thirty years ago, and that it is always possible to live on historical capital.”¹⁸⁸ After their seizure of power, the Old Radicals concentrated their efforts on the constitutional question and the issue of the political system, which they deemed best served through the adaptation of the English cabinet model, guaranteeing a neutral Crown and the supremacy of the strongest party. By presenting themselves publicly as the perpetrators of the radical tradition, recycling the same “revolutionary language,” the same concepts and rhetoric (anti-capitalistic, collectivistic and egalitarian) and alluding to their intransigent past, the Old Radicals managed to maintain the loyalty of the electoral body. This also goes to explain how they managed to effectively reconcile and bridge the discrepancy between the values and the vision of a proclaimed peasant state with parliamentarism British style.¹⁸⁹

A common denominator in both the Old and the Independent Radicals was the rejection of the individualistic philosophical premises of liberalism. However, whereas the Independents negated individualism from the standpoint of the modern left, that is, as part of the social critique exercised by social democracy, the anti-individualism of the Old Radicals sprang rather from a reaffirmation of patriarchalism “as the most profound element of the Serbian political mentality and tradition.” Thus, while the latter chose a crude anti-European posture as a constituent part of their official ideology, the Independents, on the contrary, opted for an indisputably European orientation. This divergence of orientation and content forecast also the development of the political profiles of the two parties: the Old Radicals “towards extreme conservatism, which was a particular admixture of traditionalist/populist and civil elements,” and the Independent Radicals “towards the civil left.”¹⁹⁰

The transitory passage from pre-Marxist populist socialism to the Marxism of the Second International was an ambivalent and lengthy process in Serbia. According to Mira Bogdanović, it lasted altogether some thirty years, and with the creation of the social-democratic party was simply developed to another level.¹⁹¹ In the 1890s the picture was still rather fluid and the ideological fronts between socialists and Radicals were blurred. The Serbian Artisan and Worker’s Union (*Zanatlijsko-Radnički Savez*), established in 1892, was thus a kind of federative organization of various educational mutual societies and consisted of a mixed membership, including master artisans, artisan

workers and peasants. Along with the pictures of Lassalle, Marx and Marković, its meetings places were also adorned by a picture of Adam Bogosavljević, the peasant leader.¹⁹² A period characterized by intensive soul-searching, these years witnessed not only the introduction of the principal Marxist standpoints of the Second International, but also the use of indigenous socialist traditions and attempts to consider Marxism from the perspective of local Serbian conditions. This eclecticism was also reflected in the linguistic sphere, where references to the industrial proletariat were accommodated alongside broader populist descriptive categories like the “working people,” while syndicalist organizations were ranked along with *zadrugas*. The liberation of the “working people” from the “parasitic classes of rulers and petty merchants” was to be the work of common action between the proletariat and the poor peasants and artisans, declared *Socijal-Demokrat*, the first Marxist newspaper in the country.¹⁹³

NOTES

1 Mishkova, “Le Radicalisme Serbe,” 170.

2 Shemjakin, *Ideologija Nikoli Pašića*, 421.

3 Svetozar Marković (born 21 September [9 September O.S.], 1846 in Jagodina; died 10 March 1875, in Trieste) was the founding figure of the radical (socialist) movement. He studied in Belgrade, St. Petersburg and Zurich and was affiliated to the First International. In his early political career he affiliated with the Serbian Liberal Youth Movement (*Omladina*) from which he eventually distanced himself in order to lead the radical (socialist) movement. In Zurich, where the initial group was physically and intellectually consolidated, he was the rallying point for a series of young intellectuals who became his colleagues and disciples, and who after his premature death in 1875 were to take the leadership of the radical movement like N. Pašić and Pera Todorović. He launched several newspapers, starting with *Radenik* in 1871, *Јавност* 1873, *Glas Јавности* 1874 and *Ослободjenje*.

4 Protić, *Radikali u Srbiji*.

5 This line of thought is followed by Latinka Perović and A. L. Shemjakin and is also the mode of argumentation of my own exegeses. See: Perović, *Srpski socijalisti 19. veka*, vol. III; Shemjakin, as above.

6 On this line of argumentation, see: Radenić, “Razvoj socijalističke misli u Srbiji.”

7 Milentijević, *A History of the Serbian Social Democratic Party*, 87–135, specifically 104.

- 8 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 82.
- 9 Marković in his "Socijalizam ili društvo pitanje" (Socialism or the social question) discusses fluently Proudhon, Lassalle, Blanc, Marx, Bakunin. Marković, *Celokupna dela*, vol. XIII, 91–155.
- 10 Perović, "Teorijski i istorijski koreni socijalističke misli u Srbiji" in Perović, *Srpsko-Ruske revolucionarne veze*, 13–15.
- 11 Some of the most important populist theories of non-capitalistic development were advanced by the "Legal Populists" of the 1880s, a testimony that theoretical populism is not to be limited to the decades of the 1860s and 1870s, which are generally acknowledged as the flourishing period of classical populism. Flerovski, Vorontsov and Danielson accepted the socialization of labor and sought a formula that would allow for a smooth and painless transition. They saw in capitalism a double threat, on the one hand, an internal danger threatening the Russian peoples and on the other an external danger, threatening the Russian nation as a whole. They advocated the industrialization of Russia via socialist planning by the government agencies.
- 12 Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism*, 26.
- 13 Walicki, "Russia" in Ionescu and Gellner, eds., *Populism*, 67 (emphasis in the original).
- 14 Perović, "Socijalistička misao—bitna tendencija u razvoju društvene i političke misli u Srbiji" in Perović, *Srpsko-Ruske revolucionarne veze*, 20.
- 15 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 118.
- 16 Walicki, *The Controversy*, 10.
- 17 Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 174ff.
- 18 Ibid., 199.
- 19 Ibid., 200.
- 20 Ibid., 201.
- 21 Ibid., 202.
- 22 Quoted in Walicki, *Russia*, 83.
- 23 Stokes, *Legitimacy Through Liberalism*, 31.
- 24 Ibid., 59.
- 25 Mishkova, *Prisposobiavane na svobodata*, 147.
- 26 Ibid., 146ff.
- 27 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 11; also Mishkova, *ibid.*, 140–149.
- 28 Ibid., 216–218.
- 29 Ibid., 219.
- 30 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. II, 273.
- 31 Pereira, *The Thought and Teachings of N. G. Černyševski*, 60–70.
- 32 Jovanović, "Naše ustavno pitanje," *Političke i pravne rasprave I–III*, in *Sabrana dela*, vol. 2, 32.
- 33 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 181–182, 189–190.
- 34 Pašić, "Pismo Nikole Pašića Miši Dimitrijeviću" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 53.
- 35 Pašić, "Pismo Nikole Pašića A. I. Zinovjevu" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 238–239. Under "preserving the good and healthy institutions" Pašić meant the

Orthodox Church, the peasant community and the peoples' state, in which sovereignty was to be achieved via self-government.

- 36 Perović, "Introduction" in *Nikola Pašić u narodnoj skupštini*, vol. I, 28.
- 37 Ibid., 36.
- 38 Ibid., 34.
- 39 Pašić, "Pismo Nikole Pašića ministru prosvete i crkvenih dela" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 28.
- 40 Pašić, "Sloga Srbo-Hrvata" (The Serbian-Croatian accord), in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 292 (emphasis mine).
- 41 Gerschekron, *Economic Backwardness*, 155.
- 42 Marković, "Šta treba da radimo?" (What do we need to do?) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. I, 154.
- 43 Perović, "Teorijski i istorijski," 17.
- 44 Perović, "Politička elita i modernizacija u prvoj deceniji nezavisnost srpske države" (The political elite and modernization in the first decade of independence of the Serbian State), in *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XX. veka*, vol. I, 239.
- 45 *Zadruga* is the popular term used to describe the complex (extended and multiple) family. The term itself is quite recent, its institutionalized usage dating from the nineteenth century. There is a long-standing historiographical discussion on almost all aspects of the *zadruga*, its status, origins and function. For a long time a "nativist" historical approach, cogently supported by ethnographic and folklore studies, treated the *zadruga* as a perennial phenomenon (dating from the Middle Ages) and pertaining specifically to Slavic and Balkan civilization. Most recent scholarship has heavily contested not only the "from time immemorial thesis," but also the "all Balkan" and the "specifically Slavic" thesis. *Zadruga* zones in nineteenth-century Balkans were unevenly distributed, showing a concentration in the mountainous stockbreeding area between the valleys of the Sava and the Morava, the northwestern part of the Balkan range, that is, the mountainous territories between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the Rhodope, the tribal region of Montenegro and Northern Albania, while valley belts were present in the military frontier of Croatia, Slavonia and Vojvodina, some valleys of Serbia, Western and Central Albania, Southern Macedonia and Southern Albania. The presence of the *zadruga* thus can be evidenced only for some Balkan territories, and not all exclusively Slavic (ex. Albania or Southern Hungary). In Bulgaria it was concentrated in the most western part of the country, it was almost completely absent from Romania and Greece. A challenging interpretation with respect to the origins of the *zadruga* has been put forward by M. Todorova, who argues for viewing the *zadruga* "not as an archaic survival, but as the development of a new (or cyclical) response to the challenges created by new conditions." This change occurred in the eighteenth century, whereby disorders led to serious dislocation of the rural and urban population, who in their turn oriented themselves towards stockbreeding, with ensuing changes in the household organization. See: Todorova, *Bal-*

kan Family Structure, particularly 133–174. The Serbian Socialists' appropriation of the *zadruga* as a socialist ingredient raises some interesting questions. Are we dealing simply with a theme, a concoction that is appreciated for its resemblance to the Russian *mir* and *obština*, as in the original doctrine of the Russian Populists, or is *zadruga* and its disintegration a "real" issue in the case of Serbia? It is noteworthy that nowhere in their writings (actually only Marković explored the topic), is the *zadruga* submitted to meticulous economic scrutiny with respect to its economic viability. It is also interesting that the *zadruga*, or the extended patriarchal family, is neither an issue nor a theme for the early Bulgarian pre-Marxian (populist) Socialists. From the later Marxists, only Blagoev refers briefly to the *zadruga* in "Shto e sotsializŭm." Is it possible to conclude that their perceptions corresponded more or less to the actual conditions in their countries? That is, that the greater distribution of *zadruga* zones in Serbia induced the Socialists to appreciate it as a local particularity and potentiality?

- 46 Marković, "Srbija na istoku" (Serbia in the East), in *Celokupna dela*, vol. VIII, 75.
- 47 Ibid., 96.
- 48 Ibid., 85.
- 49 Marković, "Srbija na istoku," 20ff.
- 50 Ibid., 82.
- 51 Perović, "Socijalistička misao," 22.
- 52 According to Mikhailovski, the Russian peasant living predominantly by self-sufficiency was an all-rounded human being. Living a poor but full life, he was able to use his capacities and abilities fully, performing various tasks. "The peasant community is egalitarian, homogeneous, but its members have differentiated, many-sided personalities. The lack of development of the division of labor (complex co-operation) enables them to preserve their independence and simple co-operation ... *Social* ('organic') progress, consisting in the division of labor, is being achieved at the cost of the individual, whose freedom and 'wholeness' is being sacrificed for the benefit of a supra-human social organism. Capitalism—the culmination of the division of labor—is the fullest victory of the supra-individual society over the individual man." Walicki, "Russia," 79.
- 53 Marković, "Srbija na istoku," 83ff.
- 54 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 76.
- 55 Perović, "Teorijski i istorijski," 16.
- 56 Marković, "Savremena-buržuazna-država" (The contemporary bourgeois state), in *Celokupna dela*, vol. V, 3–10.
- 57 Marković, "Srbija na istoku," 84ff.
- 58 On the Nacertanije, see: Beschnitt, *Nationalismus bei Serben und Kroaten*, 54–65.
- 59 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti 19. veka*, vol. II, 323–328.
- 60 Marković, "Socijazam ili društveno pitanje" (Socialism or the social question) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. XIII, 150.

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- 61 Marković, “Društvena i politička borba u Evropi” (The social and political struggle in Europe) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. II, 118.
- 62 Canovan, *Populism*, 94.
- 63 Skerlić, *Svetozar Marković*, quoted in Bodganović, *The Serbian Labor Movement*, 114.
- 64 The predicament of latecomers in coming to terms with the issue of “underdevelopment” here goes much beyond the experience of Russia or Serbia. Could it be argued that the disparity of development in itself quasi-teleologically produces such theories? The frequency or regularity by which they arise in societies on the verge of modernity seems to imply precisely that. The responses differ, of course, according to the premises of the “indigenous” civilization and the nature and dynamic of the encroachment of external forces on traditional societies. On this, see: Eisenstadt, “Introduction: Historical Traditions, Modernization and Development” in Eisenstadt, *Patterns of Modernity*, vol. 2, 1–11. On South American intellectuals and modernization, see: Hirschman, “Ideologies of Economic Development in Latin America” in Hirschman, *A Bias for Hope*, 270–311. On Iran, see: Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West*. On Turkey, see: Ziya Gökalp. On the general problematique, see: Matossian, “Ideologies of Delayed Industrialization.”
- 65 Žujović, “Da gradimo ili ne gradimo gvozdeni put?” (Should we or shouldn’t we construct the iron road?) in *Sabrani spisi*, vol. I, 272ff.
- 66 Pašić, “Pismo Nikole Pašića Mihailu Svilokosiću” in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 152.
- 67 Marković, “Velika Srbija” (Great Serbia) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. I, 192–194 (emphasis mine).
- 68 Jovanović, “Naše ustavno pitanje u XIX veku” (Our constitutional question in the XIX century), *Političke i pravne rasprave I–III*, in *Sabrana dela*, vol. II, 32–33.
- 69 “Kragujevcanima” (To the people of Kragujevac), *Staro Oslobođenje*, Nr. 29, 22.10.1875, as quoted in Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 32.
- 70 Todorović, “Odbrana” (Defense) in *Izabrani spisi*, 177ff, 205 (emphasis mine).
- 71 The agrarian resistance to the centralizing policies of the state and the implementation of a bureaucratic system are treated in: Boestfleisch, *Moderisierungsprobleme und Entwicklungskrisen*.
- 72 Marković, “Opština” (The community) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. XI, 126–140.
- 73 Marković, “Sud i Pravda” (The court and justice) in *Celokupna dela*, vol. XI, 171.
- 74 Todorović, “Odbrana” in *Izabrani spisi*, 198–202.
- 75 “Treba li nam železnica?” (Do we need a railway?), *Radenik*, no. 41, 7.9.1871.
- 76 “Treba li nam železnica?” *Radenik*, no. 43, 11.9.1871.
- 77 “Treba li nam železnica?” *Radenik*, no. 45, 16.9.1871.

- 78 "Treba li nam železnica?" *Radenik*, no. 56, 16.10.1871.
- 79 "Treba li nam železnica?" *Radenik*, no. 44, 13.9.1871.
- 80 "Treba li nam železnica?" *Radenik*, no. 62, 10.10. 1871.
- 81 "Treba li nam železnica?" *Radenik*, no. 66, 9.11.1871.
- 82 Pašić, "Pismo Nikole Pašića ministru prosvete i crkvenih dela" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 28.
- 83 Pašić, "Govor Nikole Pašića u narodnoj skupštini" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 63–75.
- 84 Quoted in Petrović, *Adam Bogosavljević*, 53–54 (emphasis in the original).
- 85 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 86 A party that "will rise above the dynastic intrigues, above tedious, currently violent party quarrels, above the petty, shallow and egoistic abusive authorities and the historical ruins, and would have as a goal only the people's interest" as phrased by Pera Todorović, "Predgovor" in *Rusija i Balkansko pitanje* ot M. Dragomanov, 1877, quoted in Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 50.
- 87 "Nacrt projekta za program Radikalne partije" (Sketch for the program of a Radical Party) in Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti Srpskih političkih stranaka*, 79–81.
- 88 "Radikalni program Nikole Pašića" (The Radical program of Nikola Pašić) in Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti*, 83–84.
- 89 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 228.
- 90 "This is not a theoretical program to take shape in the distant future, but a program of practical reforms, carried by the party with the firm intention to be put immediately into practice with [the party's] foundation and to be materialized in the shortest time possible. This program was not master-minded in some kind of office, but [was developed] by the simple people (*ljudi iz naroda*), the popular representatives. Everybody's thoughts has been sounded, the peasant in the peasant jacket and sandals, the popular priest, the tradesman and the professor have been asked; everybody has explained his rationale and the program was developed in mutual agreement and understanding; it belongs to nobody exclusively, but to all of us—it is our common 'faith'." Quoted in *Programi i statuti*, eds. Krestić and Ljušić, 105.
- 91 "Program Narodne Radikalne Stranke" (The program of the National/Popular Radical Party) in Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti*, 101–104.
- 92 Jovanović, "Pera Todorović" in *Političke i pravne rasprave*, vol. 2, 189. It has been the contention of scholars that Todorović's sojourn in France was instrumental for his distancing from the sources of Russian Populism. Since Todorović was indeed the principal theoretician and agitator of the Radicals until the late 1880s and the author of the 1881 program, he is regarded as the key figure in explaining the party's alleged "ideological re-orientation." For a discussion of the position claiming the abandonment of socialism in Todorović and his orientation towards a "civil platform" according to the program of French radicalism as analyzed by Velisar Ninčić, see: Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 84–85.

- 93 Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 101.
- 94 Ibid., 97–101.
- 95 “Zapisnik rada glavne skupštine Narodne Radikalne Stranke, III. sastanak, Kragujevac, 27. Jula 1882,” *Samouprava*, 1882, quoted in Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 98ff.
- 96 Ibid., 99–100 (emphasis mine).
- 97 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 120.
- 98 Ibid., 103ff.
- 99 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 94–97.
- 100 Jovanović, “Pera Todorović,” 190.
- 101 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 96.
- 102 Ibid., 91.
- 103 Pašić, “Pisma Nikole Pašića P. A. Kulakovskom” in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 156–157 (emphasis mine).
- 104 Perović, “Introduction” to Cenić, Dimitrije Mita, *Izabrani spisi*, 164.
- 105 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 218.
- 106 Ibid., 223.
- 107 “Gradjansko društvo i njegove društveno-političke partije,” quoted in Cenić, 165.
- 108 Quoted in Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 177.
- 109 Jovanović, “Pera Todorović,” 183–184.
- 110 Shemjakin, *Ideologija Nikoli Pašica*, 342.
- 111 Jovanović, “Pera Todorović,” 183.
- 112 Quoted in Shemjakin, *Ideologija Nikoli Pašica*, 342.
- 113 “Statuti Srpske Narodne Radikalne Stranke” (The statutes of the Serbian Radical People’s Party) in Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti*, 132.
- 114 Perović, “Introduction” in *Krvava godina*, 32.
- 115 Todorović, *Krvava godina*, 258.
- 116 Perović, “Introduction” in *Krvava godina*, 27–28.
- 117 Shemjakin, *Ideologija Nikoli Pašica*, 359.
- 118 Pašić mentions Nikolai Danilevski and his *Russia and Europe* (1869) in his writings. Danilevski made use of slavophile ideas but reorganized them into a different ideological structure so as to make them fit with the concept of a strong Russian state. Seminal in Danilevski’s theoretical system was the rejection of the slavophiles’ universalistic values (true Christianity, traditional social bonds) and an analysis of the evolution of humanity according to different “historio-cultural” types. Cultural activity, according to Danilevski, evolved in four major spheres, that is, religious, cultural, political and socio-economic. The Slavic type was to be the first truly synthetic “tetra-elemental” type, as the Slavs had the ability to be active in all four spheres of culture. By turning her back to Europe, conquering Constantinople and uniting all Slavs, Russia would create the superior, “eleventh cultural type.” See: Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 290–297.
- 119 Walicki, “Personality and Society in the Ideology of the Russian Slavophiles,” 3.

- 120 Ibid., 4.
- 121 Ibid., 5.
- 122 Ibid., 8.
- 123 Pašić, "Sloga Srbo-Hrvata" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 286–287.
- 124 Ibid., 292.
- 125 ibid., 317.
- 126 ibid., 290.
- 127 Ibid., 304.
- 128 Ibid., 310–311.
- 129 Ibid., 312–313.
- 130 Ibid., 315.
- 131 Pašić, "Pisma Nikole Pašića Mitropolitu Mihailu" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 173.
- 132 Shemjakin, *Ideologija*, 200.
- 133 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 101.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 Quoted in Jovanović, *Vlada Alexandra Obrenovića in Sabrana dela*, vol. 7, 108.
- 136 Jovanović, "Pera Todorović," 186.
- 137 Quoted in Jovanović, "Pera Todorović," 185–186.
- 138 Quoted in Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 231.
- 139 Steward, Agnus, "The Social Roots" in Gellner and Ionescu, eds., *Populism*, 182.
- 140 Ibid., 183.
- 141 Quoted in Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III., 116–117.
- 142 At the first congress of the Radical Party, held in Kragujevac in August 1882, Nikola Pašić gave a sample of the emotional force of the populist rhetoric, by bringing all these themes together: "In Europe there is no one people that deserves to be the unlimited sovereign in its state more than the Serbian people, because in Europe there is not a single state created by the ordinary people themselves. Gunjac and Opanak liberated this land from the powerful Turkish rule! Gunjac and Opanak sprinkled this land with its blood so that freedom, justice, and equality could sprout! Gunjac and Opanak traversed mountains and valleys, rivers and fields, hurrying tirelessly from one battle to the other, subduing the Turkish agas and spahis that had swarmed over the land! Gunjac and Opanak worked tirelessly, whether in the hottest sun, or in the rain, snow, and dark, to fill the cribs with fodder, the barn with grain, the stables with stock, the larder with wine and brandy! ... Gunjac and Opanak—that is the Serbian nation that created this state by blood, maintains it by sweat and work, protects it by life and property, and moves it forward by knowledge and experience! Gunjac and Opanak ... represent the Serbian nation that built and created this state, and by right and reason, through work and sacrifice, ought to be the supreme ruler in its own land!" Quoted in Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 250.

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- 143 Pašić, "Govor Nikole Pašića na glavnoj skupštini Narodne Radikalne Stranke u Kragujevcu, 26. Jula 1882" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 131.
- 144 Pašić, "Razoružanje narodne vojske" (Disarming the national militia) in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 138.
- 145 Ibid., 137–139.
- 146 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 301.
- 147 Perović, "Introduction" to *Krvava godina*, 33.
- 148 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 302.
- 149 Jovanović, "Pera Todorović," 194.
- 150 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 143.
- 151 Pašić, "Pisma Nikole Pašića P. A. Kulakovskom" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 157–158.
- 152 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 242.
- 153 Todorović, *Krvava godina*, 113.
- 154 Ibid., 114.
- 155 Pašić, "Razoružanje narodne vojske" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 140.
- 156 Perović, "Introduction" in *Krvava godina*, 23.
- 157 Jovanović, *Naše ustavno pitanje*, 36.
- 158 Pašić, "Govor Nikole Pašića u Zaječaru" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 95.
- 159 Shemjakin, *Ideologija Nikoli Pašića*, 327.
- 160 Ibid., 330.
- 161 See: Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija*, particularly 43–111.
- 162 Perović, *Srpski socijalisti*, vol. III, 146.
- 163 Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića I. in Sabrana Dela*, vol. 6, 132–133 (emphasis mine).
- 164 Mishkova, *Prisposobjavane na Svobodata*, 262.
- 165 Jovanovic, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića I*, 63–64.
- 166 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 301.
- 167 Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića I*, 110. Jovanović comments at the same time: "it is another question, whether this partisanship that reconciled the peasant with the state, did not at the same time weaken the state and distort the state idea."
- 168 Stokes, *Politics as Development*, 257.
- 169 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, 130.
- 170 Isić, "Seljaštvo u Srbiji na parlamentarnim izvorima," 125–154.
- 171 Pašić, "Pisma Nikole Pašića P. A. Kulakovskom" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 161.
- 172 Ibid., 163.
- 173 Pašić, "Politička kronika" (Political Chronicle) in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 123ff (emphasis mine).
- 174 Pašić, "Govor Nikole Pašića na glavnom zboru Radikalne Stranke u Nišu" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 326.
- 175 Ibid., 324.
- 176 Pašić, "Govor Nikole Pašića u Smederevu" in *Pisma, članci i govori*, 319–321.

- 177 Mishkova, "Le Radicalisme Serbe," 195.
- 178 Similar critique had arisen already at the end of the century within the ranks of the Radical Party from the radical representatives of the city of Smederevo. The Smederevo Radicals contested not only the supremacy of N. Pašić, but also the party decision empowering the Main Committee with the exclusive right to decide candidates eligible to run for election. Considering the decision reactionary, they protested, claiming that "free candidacy, free choice of representatives, the independence and freedom of the representatives in the *Skupština*, that is the voice of true radicalism." The group left the party, while the party excluded two Radicals, members of the local committee, from its ranks. Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti*, 245–246.
- 179 Mishkova, *Prisposobiavane na Svobodata*, 266
- 180 "Samostalna Radikalna Stranka. Načela, program, statut (Maja–Juna 1905)" (The Independent Radical Party. Principles, program, statutes [May–June 1905]) in Krestić and Ljušić, eds., *Programi i statuti*, 317.
- 181 Ibid., 322.
- 182 Popović-Obradović, "O ideološkom profilu radikala u Srbiji," 63.
- 183 Ibid., 66.
- 184 As quoted in Bogdanović, *The Serbian Labor Movement*, 104–105 (emphasis mine).
- 185 Popović-Obradović, "O ideološkom profilu radikala u Srbiji," 67.
- 186 Skerlić, *Feljtoni, skice i govori*, 324–327 (emphasis mine).
- 187 Popović-Obradović, "O ideološkom profilu," 68.
- 188 Skerlić, *Feljtoni, skice i govori*, 404.
- 189 Obradović-Popović, "O ideološkom profilu," 69–75; See also: Stojanovic, "Party elites in Serbia 1903–1914," 133.
- 190 Ibid., 76.
- 191 Bogdanović, "Srpska socijaldemokratska partija i seljaštvo," 111ff.
- 192 Ibid., 112.
- 193 Ibid., 112.

IV. CAUGHT UP IN THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MODERNITY

The country that is more developed
industrially only shows, to the less
developed, the image of its own future.

Karl Marx

Something stronger than our desires and
decisions is in play and is shaking our party,
something beyond us determines its growth
and until we grasp it in all its complexity,
until we harmonize our understanding and
our activity with these *external conditions*,
then our philosophizing will more obstruct
the party than help it develop.

(emphasis mine)

Janko Sakūzov

The history of the Bulgarian socialist movement is a tormented story of fierce ideological debates, power struggles and multiple schisms (at least four occurred—1892, 1903, 1905, 1907—before the establishment of the Third International). Characteristically, and contrary to the more general experience, the Third International did not provoke a split. Rather, the “Narrow” faction of the Bulgarian Social Democrats—whose genesis we will follow in this chapter—was transformed into the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1919. This section concentrates on the 1903 schism¹ within Bulgarian Social Democracy, which divided the Bulgarian Socialists into two contending factions, the “Broads” and the “Narrows.” These would be involved in a perennial vendetta from that moment onwards. While the Bulgarian Socialists managed to survive the initial 1892 split between the “Party” and the “Union” factions relatively unharmed (they reunited rather quickly in 1894), the 1903 split was irreversible, notably weakening the socialist movement until the First World War. The split determined, to a large extent, the ensuing attitudes of the two factions, whose policies were not solely dictated by ideological deliberations, but also by their internecine rivalry.

As with most historical phenomena, the 1903 schism was the result of multiple causes and cannot be pinned down to a single explanation: ideological differences, the revisionist controversy in the Second International, personal ambitions, the fear of becoming a minority faction within the party, the Serbian and the Romanian examples,² the self-feeding, spiral-like dynamic of polemics, the weak social basis of the party, etc., all contributed to the split. The following section is less a factological account of the schism, but rather an analysis of introduction of the social-democratic discourse within the social, political and anthropological fabric of Bulgarian society in the last decades of the nineteenth century. It seeks to elucidate some contested aspects of this cohabitation, which induced socialist intellectuals to adapt diverging perceptions and interpretations of Bulgarian "reality," and consequently of the role of social democracy in it. The debate that preceded and flowed into the schism (1900–1903) was a highly interesting theoretical dispute on the limits of social democracy, the viability of the application of a "universal" Marxist model of social evolution, and the structural problems that arose in the process of its contextualization in the Bulgarian socio-economic milieu. It brought to the forefront long-lasting, yet unarticulated, dilemmas that had perturbed the party from the moment of its inception. Bulgaria was the first Balkan country to adopt the social-democratic paradigm and the Erfurt program (1893) and is thus of particular interest.

It is commonly thought that the 1903 split was predominantly an expression of the personal animosities of capricious personalities, incapable of coexisting within the same party organization but who, in essence, were saying the same thing. The fact that both parties professed Marxism and their allegiance to the SPD seems to encourage this view. As will be demonstrated, there were significant ideological issues at stake and not just problems of personality and ambition.³ This chapter concentrates on the ideological dispute that erupted within the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party in the period between 1900 and 1903, since the polemic between the two sides best highlights the principle topics of discord. The chronological horizon, nonetheless, extends back to the initial split of 1892 in order to pinpoint some of the similarities in the preoccupations and objections of socialist intellectuals. The phenomenon of Broad socialism (1900–1903) never developed into a coherent and independent ideological system but was,

rather, formed out of everyday negotiated political practice and experience, which demanded a rethinking of “tactics” more adapted to the concrete problems of Bulgarian society. It was even less about “opportunism,” the “degeneration” of and the “aberration” from Marxism, as was habitually claimed by the Broads’ critics. It was more about what Janko Sakūzov called the “Scylla and Charybdis” of Marxism, the tension between theoretical prescriptions and their practical application. The dilemmas facing the Bulgarian Social Democrats were neither exceptional nor unique; similar preoccupations, such as the relationship to the peasantry, the tension between theory and practice, and politics in the intersection between long-term and short-term goals, perturbed kindred parties like the SPD. Due to the different social composition and the lagging economic development of the country, these preoccupations, however, in Bulgaria—as in most Eastern European countries—took on a more incisive and existential character.

This chapter may be read against the background of the previous one on early Serbian socialism, populism. The Bulgarian case study represents a change of paradigm and focuses on the establishment of Marxism and social democracy, which with the constitution of the Bulgarian Workers’ Social Democratic Party (BWSDP) in 1891 became an active political agent in Bulgarian politics. At the ideological level, the Bulgarian Social Democrats easily surpassed the early Populists, but this did not resolve the complex relationship between predominantly agrarian structures and modernization. In the Serbian case, we observed how, in the successful adaptation of populism by the radical movement, an ideology with a mixed regressive/progressive character (advocating a controlled modernization with strong reference to past values) operated in a predominantly agrarian society with little social differentiation in a period of transition. The question this chapter wishes to address is how a fully-fledged modernizing ideology like social democracy related to a similar social configuration, and what were the structural problems that arose in the process of its adaptation.

The major problem for the Bulgarian Socialists consisted not only in “applying scientific socialism to realities which were not part of the classical model of capitalist development,”⁴ namely diagnosing the particularities of “backwardness,” but also—as part and parcel of the Social Democrats’ claim to public political existence—mobilizing the population behind the message of social democracy. The Bulgari-

ian Social Democrats were amongst the greatest champions of a rapid modernization in Bulgaria. In essence, this translated into the necessity of applying a modernist ideology to a population consisting predominantly of peasants, petty producers and craftsmen, stubbornly resisting their loss of status in a sluggishly changing new world. This chapter wishes to elucidate how the Bulgarian Socialists became entangled in the contradictions of their own avant-guard role as messengers of a highly modern theory, which, however, was poorly matched to the social structure of Bulgaria. Ideas move faster than social organisms and mentalities. In the words of Janko Sakūzov, writing to Karl Kautsky, “the birth of an idea becomes necessary *after* the change of things, but what if this idea gets transplanted in another, as yet not so developed land ... In this case, isn’t the idea the *primus motorus*?”⁵ Bridging the dissonance between imported theory and local circumstances was a formidable task. There was “something beyond” their will or deeds that brought socialist intellectuals like Sakūzov or Nikola Gabrovski to conceive of the socialist movement in terms of broad political activity. Equally, there was something genuine in the fears of their socialist comrades that this might be going a bit too far. Adapting Marxism to an agrarian society required some kind of modification. Both factions were conscious of going through a long-lasting transitional period; it induced them, however, to adopt very different recipes about how to deal with their transitional present.

The advent of Broad socialism—as far as we can generalize about the event as, firstly, not all its adherents shared precisely the same views on all issues, and, secondly, it did not present a homogenous theoretical alternative, but rather a reaction with theoretical implications—was a phenomenon pertaining clearly to Bulgarian circumstances that may be best understood as an attempt at a local adaptation of Marxism, rather than a forthright deviation from it. The Broads were not born as a reformatory socialist party; they eventually evolved into one. It is the contention of this section that what came to be defined as Broad socialism was in essence more than a simple reflex of the international revisionist debate and was triggered as much by echoes from afar as by developments from within. It arose out of the contradictions inherent in the introduction of a full-fledged modernizing ideology like social democracy into a local context of “backwardness.” Furthermore, the splitting of the left pool in Bulgarian politics, characterized by two

events which should be seen as interrelated⁶—the autonomization of the agrarian movement, on the one hand, and by the advent of Broad socialism, on the other⁷—could be read as a “failure” of social democracy to *acclimatize* itself to and address the specific problems of Bulgarian society, namely the agrarian question and the democratic deficit.

Leon Trotsky provided an interesting report on the causes of the schism. He attributed it, on the one hand, to the presence of an excessive number of intellectuals in the ranks of the socialist movement and, on the other, to the prevailing, “underdeveloped” socio-economic conditions in Bulgaria:

The numerical hypertrophy of socialist intellectuals contains the danger of serious temptations and corruption for the young workers’ party: its *general staff is simply too numerous*. The possibility of the leaders to exercise direct political influence is relatively limited *due to the confined number of their army* ... The “indirect approach” [of the Broads] ... tries to surmount the historical process and through artificial alliances has given the Social Democrats a level of influence that cannot be maintained due to the current numbers and the degree of organization of the proletariat. In Bulgaria, the “indirect approach,” that is the collaboration with bourgeois democrats, is more dangerous than anywhere else: where does this Bulgarian “democracy” start and where does it end...? On the other hand, the same conditions can provoke the opposite danger, that is, the transformation of the political party of the working class into a socialist seminary [Trotsky here refers to the Narrows].⁸

Kautsky, a persistent champion of the reconciliation of the two factions, emphasized in his essay “Socialists in Economically Backward Counties” the difficulties confronting socialist activists in societies where the economic base was insufficiently developed:

Serving freedom is a difficult task. Serving socialism in economically backward countries without a strong industry, without an abundant, organized and educated industrial proletariat, without deeply rooted democratic institutions and customs, is a most strenuous task. Industrial workers, half peasants still, filled with peasant and petty bourgeois ideas, are hardly penetrated by proletarian class-consciousness. As an insignificant minority they lack resistance power and self-consciousness *and usually, small organizations, do not dispose of the attractive power of the big masses. For this reason they are easily inclined to splits, where, quite often, the best energies of*

socialism are squandered in destructive fratricidal discords. Under such circumstances, it is even easier to come to splits, since the conditions and the tasks of a socialist in such a socially backward country are more complex than the same tasks in the highly developed capitalistic industry. The problems of modern times intermingle with older social formations, and among the struggling strata and classes, it is the peasants, the artisans and the intellectuals who predominantly come to the foreground of state life rather than the hired laborers of big industry. The task of social democracy, however, is to support all the suppressed and exploited, not only industrial workers. Their significance for a Marxist consists in the fact that the other toiling strata are incapable of liberating themselves without the help of the industrial workers ... Their needs and misery are not of a minor significance for the socialist than the needs and the misery of the industrial workers. The more the latter predominate, the easier the tasks of social democracy are ... The more complex the situation, tasks and means of struggle are for the socialist party, the easier it comes to internal disagreement, a circumstance that in small organizations easily leads to splits and sectarianism. In countries where socialists have not developed into a big force, they are forced to struggle against the persecution of governments, the villainy of wealthy opponents, and the obstinacy and indifference of the broad masses. However, these difficulties are only a superficial pain when additionally burdened with the need to defend oneself against murderous attacks from comrades, who serve the same purpose but with different means and methods. This side of party struggle can never have an elevating stimulation: on the contrary it can only produce repugnance and bitterness. With the exception of Russia, there is barely another country in the world where socialists split incessantly like in Bulgaria, as has been the case from the very beginning of the movement in 1891. And nowhere did our movement weaken to such an extent from internal strives as in Bulgaria.⁹

Whereas this analysis focuses predominantly on the 1903 schism, the author deems it necessary to downgrade the actual event of the split, which *sui generis* has polarized historical research. The schism is of interest to the extent that it highlights the quandaries emanating from the process of adapting the Marxist paradigm. As an event, it was undeniably detrimental and weakened the Bulgarian socialist movement as much on the political as on the syndicalist level.¹⁰ It was, however, less significant with regard to the role of the left in the broader structural set-up of Bulgarian politics. From a *longue durée* perspective, the

split did not affect or change the constellation of political powers and balances. The “real” turning point in this respect came with the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and most emphatically with the crisis ensuing from the defeat in the First World War, which represents the real “watershed” in Bulgarian politics. The fissures of the crisis of legitimacy, characteristic of the pre-war political system, were later deepened, corroborated now by the losses of two wars, a profound economic crisis, a political polarization between the state class/right and the anti-war left (Agrarians and Narrows), and the absolute breakdown of the nationalism-politics nexus, which in the inter-war period developed into an outright rejection of the established political elites and their practices hitherto.

1. The Historiography of the Schism

The historiography of the schism has often remained engulfed in the argumentation of the polemic itself. As can be foreseen, it was primarily dominated by the communist interpretation, which emphasized the opportunistic and heretical character of the Broads and was preoccupied with establishing a direct pedigree of continuity between Narrow socialism and communism. This hermeneutic framework stressed the disinterestedness and the theoretical orthodoxy of the Narrow Socialists in contrast with the heterodox and opportunistic attitude of the Broads. The most common argument—initially advanced by Dimitŭr Blagoev—regarded Broad socialism as a *direct reflex of the revisionist debate*.¹¹ Blagoev was right in identifying the ideological matrix of Sakŭzov's dissent to the discussion initiated by Bernstein. However, the relevant issue here is the question of reflex or adaptation. (Here, reflex is understood as the exact mirroring or copying of a process taking place elsewhere, and adaptation is interpreted in the sense of an eclectic sorting of relevant topics and their adjustment in a local context.) Despite common references to Bernstein, Sakŭzov never openly declared himself an adherent. Most probably, he wished to avoid categorizations that would implicate him directly in the German dispute, and label him an outright "revisionist" epigone. Perhaps another reason was his own "conviction" that he was not espousing the ultimate theoretical axioms of revisionism, but was rather "picking" out the aspects he considered most fit and valid for the Bulgarian context. In fact what is striking about the inception period of the "Broad heresy" (1900–1903) is not its ideological dependence, but rather its *ideological independence*.

More convincing is the explanation of Armando Pitassio, who attributes Sakŭzov's ideological experimentation to an intensive search for appropriate answers to the problems of Bulgarian society. Judging the correspondence between Sakŭzov and Bernstein, Pitassio concludes, "that it was more limited in quantity, more poor in contents, more formal and finally took place much later," than Sakŭzov's cor-

respondence with Kautsky. It was, rather, the necessity to find answers “to the needs of democracy, economic development, the strengthening of the proletariat, the relationship to the countryside, [that] push[ed] Sakūzov, like other Socialists close to him, to search for answers in various directions.” Pitassio’s argument is even more convincing when he relates it to the translating activity of the Broads. Sakūzov translated Kautsky from German and then worked on a translation of Isaev, the Russian humanist Socialist. Similarly, Dimitŭr Dimitrov [a Broad, and the principle translator of Bernstein into Bulgarian] undertook, along with Vasil Kolarov, a translation of a fierce polemic against Bernstein. Indeed, this translating activity does not indicate a one-sided ideological preference.¹² Sina Maria Dubowoj argues for the outright failure of revisionism to implant itself in Bulgaria as such, and concludes that “theoretical disputes in Western-European social democracy were used merely as polemical weapons by both factions in the internal disputes within the Bulgarian socialist movement, both before and after the split.”¹³ Dubowoj pointedly identifies the popular practice of libelous campaigns; however, due to the fact that has not delved seriously into the ideological contents of the dispute between the two factions, she fails to take into account the instances of ideological kinship between revisionism and Broad socialism. The chronological horizon overlaps more or less. The revisionist debate in Germany reached its peak precisely at the end of the 1890s. On the other hand, it could be strongly argued that the theoretical “revolt” of the Broads was as much triggered by preoccupations and impasses at the local level as by theoretical impulses from the outside. What is sure is that the debate within German social democracy provided for a *precedence of dissent*, that is, the possibility to disagree on principles.

A second basic argument relates “Broad” socialism to *opportunism*. In their hunt for electoral success and parliamentary careers, the Broads abandoned Marxist principles and tried to attract the masses, adulterating thus the character of the party from “proletarian” to “petty bourgeois.” Despite the ideologically loaded character of this explanation, it merits some serious consideration. What was the political profile of the Social Democratic Party? What function did it occupy in the Bulgarian public sphere? Which part of the population was inclined to be its constituency? How can the initial electoral successes of the Social Democrats in almost exclusively agrarian districts be explained?¹⁴

Were only the Broads to be accused of political practice of this kind?¹⁵ Moreover, the opportunism argument does not adequately explain the multiple changing of sides or allegiances of intellectuals like Georgi Bakalov or Gabrovski. Bakalov, along with the other students of the Geneva group like Krüstiū Rakovski, were initially against the creation of the Party and in the first split (1892) supported the Union. The split between the Broads and the Narrows (1903) found him on the side of the Narrows. In 1905 Bakalov broke from the Narrows after being accused of “anarcho-liberalism,”¹⁶ and later joined the Broads. Along with other dissident groups from the Narrows (such as N. Kharlakov and Sakharov who were expelled from the Narrow party in 1907), they merged with the Broads, forming the United Social Democrats. In 1920 Bakalov switched back to the Narrows. Equally Gabrovski,¹⁷ the prime motor behind the creation of the party in 1891, found himself on the side of the Broads after the 1903 split, and then moved back to the Narrows during the First World War period. This pattern of transgressions is interesting. The first decade of the twentieth century finds the most “sophisticated” social-democratic intellectuals crossing over to the Broad camp. Equivalently, we have the reverse movement, an ebbing of the ranks of the Broads and a flow into the Communist Party around the 1920s. The October Revolution, the bankruptcy of international social democracy, the catastrophes of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, the pro-war stance of the Broads during the war, and the ensuing polarization of Bulgarian politics thereafter are some of the reasons for this mobility.

A third argument emphasizes the personal element: the rivalries and animosities, the intolerance and competitiveness among intellectuals within the Social Democratic Party.¹⁸ This argument equally merits some serious consideration. The party was not void of personal ambitions and power struggles, while its internal resources (as regards publications and leadership quality) were limited.¹⁹ However, laying overwhelming emphasis on the personal element and the aspect of power struggle within the party runs the danger of treating ideological differences—which as will be demonstrated formed the gist of the debate—as a simple epiphenomenon. To the degree that the debate was fought out as a ferocious literary exchange, it acquired a highly rhetorical and polemical style and was progressively identified as a personal clash between the “grandfather” of Bulgarian Marxism, Blagoev, and his revi-

sionist opponent, Sakūzov. Moreover, the personification of the feud was in tune with more general trends of political articulation in the Bulgarian public sphere, in so far as politics and political parties were commonly identified with individual personalities, a relatively normal phenomenon in small patriarchal societies. The human factor was definitely present and contributed in cementing the polarization between the two fronts; it was not however, the determining factor.²⁰ The actual act of the split was an issue of contingency, spurred by several reasons: the fear of the Narrows about becoming a minority within the party,²¹ major differences on principled issues, the feebleness of a small party with a weak social basis, where disagreements grew out of proportion, etc. The party had been speaking a double-edged language for a long time. The Sakūzov and Blagoev phenomena were equally the *embodiment of dilemmas*, characterizing the two sides of the same coin.

Another popular explanatory version plays on the East–West divide as exemplified in the educational path of the two main exponents of the debate, Blagoev's Russian education and Sakūzov's Western education.²² This scheme, however, seems less sustainable when the pedigree of other intellectuals that sided with one or the other faction is taken under consideration. Both G. Kirkov, Blagoev's principle ally, and Gabrovski, the party veteran who eventually sided with Sakūzov, had received their education initially in Russia and then in the West: the former in Vienna, the latter in Switzerland. The possibility that their educational path also framed, to a certain extent, the psychological disposition or make-up of both Blagoev and Sakūzov is not excluded. It is, however, insufficient to explain the Broad dissent and the schism. Sakūzov was not acquainted with revisionist ideas during his stay in the West. It is even more challenging to reconsider the interpretation which claims that the *divide between the Narrows and the Broads strictly corresponded to a left–right divide within the socialist movement*. While such a characterization might seem appropriate in the later evolution of the two fractions, more precisely for the First World War period, it is questionable whether it is suitable in describing their previous ideological profile. Firstly, because leftist and rightist tendencies existed within both fractions: for example, both Sakūzov and Gabrovski represented the leftist wing in the Broads. If the major taxonomic criterion is the attitude of the two factions to the issue of socialist revolution, then the answer must also be negative. Both factions adhered officially

to the practice of parliamentarism, while socialist preeminence was to be achieved through legal means. The principle difference between the political philosophy of Blagoev and Sakūzov on the issue of democratic legality consisted in the fact that the former considered it simply a means in order to reach a goal, giving rise to his contempt for democracy within a “bourgeois” framework, while the latter considered it a cornerstone for the establishment of socialism. It has been due to a historiographical distortion that Blagoev has been credited with “revolutionary Marxism.” He was, on the contrary, a fully-fledged evolutionist and *de facto* led his faction away from any kind of revolutionary involvement. It was the above political philosophy that dictated Sakūzov’s the pro-systemic attitude, which sought to rectify the political system, and Blagoev’s anti-systemic position, which believed that the worse matters got, the better. It was precisely these same philosophical premises that made Sakūzov more prone to collaboration with other democratic forces, and categorically predisposed Blagoev against them. It was this last policy that in the end paid off with the complete collapse of the political system after the First World War.

The most recent work on the schism is Trendafil Mitev’s *Shiroki-iat Sotsializŭm 1892–1900*.²³ Mitev’s work is an attempt to present the phenomenon of Broad socialism as a continuum from 1892 to 1900, and for precisely this reason Mitev falls prey to anachronism.²⁴ He locates the “Broad heresy” already in the initial split between the Party and the Union in 1892. This chronological sequence wishes to demonstrate a linear, genealogical continuity of heresy in the party, which logically led to the “cathartic” split of 1903. The anachronism lies in the identification of a homogenized and ideologically solidified opposition already emergent in the beginning of the 1890s. Thus, the initial split between Party and Union was just the prelude to what would later follow. Mitev operates a simplistic dichotomization in which the Party adherents develop almost naturally into the Narrows and the Union adherents into the Broad. Equally anachronistic—but serving his argument—is the use of the designation Broad socialism for the 1890s. The terms “Broad” and “Narrow” came into use in the party literature only around 1900, when the polemic around *Obshto Delo* started, and are inherently linked to this polemic.²⁵ Moreover, the topics of dispute in the 1892 and the 1903 splits are quite different. The element of continuity consists less in the solidification of clear ideological fronts, but rather

in the consistency and the recurrent character of the problems that perturbed socialist intellectuals. However, Mitev's thesis of "clear fronts" between opportunism and orthodoxy has to take into account the dissent of seminal figures like Gabrovski. Here, Mitev resolves upon another crude dichotomy. He makes a distinction between a "good Broad socialism" *à la* Gabrovski and a "bad opportunistic Broad socialism" *à la* Sakūzov. His narrative is an attempt to rehabilitate Gabrovski's agrarianism (such a selective rehabilitation is of course convenient, since Gabrovski returned to the ranks of the Narrows in 1914) and to portray it as a sincere attempt to win over the impoverished social strata of the country for the cause of socialism. He contrasts this to the opportunistic strategies and the ideological aberrations of Sakūzov and his associates, who aimed only at winning deputy mandates and, for this purpose, were ready to enter into unprincipled compromises with bourgeois parties.

According to Mitev, from 1892 onwards there were *two independent broad factions*. One, the "good and sincere Broad socialism" of Gabrovski, which developed within the Party and was a consequence of the lack of a proletarian basis and the as yet undefined party strategy, while the other, "bad and opportunistic," which developed within the Union. When the two fractions (Party and Union) united in 1894 into the BWSDP, these two different elements of Broad socialism became the same party. The Broad socialism of the Union slipped into the party like a Trojan horse, bringing a flow of "petty bourgeois" elements with it. So, Gabrovski's readiness for compromises is regarded as a "general sacrifice," a "tactical compromise" dictated by the concrete social and political circumstances. Mitev concludes that the "bellicose broad socialism" of Gabrovski had no intentions of destroying the revolutionary, Marxist essence of the BWSDP, which was rather the objective of Sakūzov's broad socialism.²⁶ The two versions of Broad socialism (good and bad) retained their distinctive character until 1894. They started, however, to converge slowly with the cooperation of Gabrovski and Sakūzov as parliamentary deputies. Their rapprochement was conditioned by the strengthening of royal reaction, and the need to restore constitutional life by means of pressure from below. Eventually, Gabrovski, after his dispute with Blagoev, would start distancing himself more and more from the official party line, supporting the "dangerous" idea that "different conditions in different countries in the world

impose the necessity that every proletarian avant-guard must follow its own concrete political tactics. These, in their turn, must be based on examples from local practice and have to be developed and perfected primarily with reference to it.”²⁷ Around the period of the Fifth, and particularly after the Sixth Party Congress, the two Broad tendencies started converging and united as a single Broad front around 1900.

The standard treatise on the schism is the work of the veteran party historiographer Krumka Sharova, *Pazcheplenieto na BRSDP prez 1903 godina*.²⁸ As can be expected, Sharova’s narrative presents the official party line on the split and is an apotheosis of the relentless struggle of the party against opportunism. The phenomenon of Broad socialism is explained traditionally as a reflex of revisionism in its Bulgarian version. The interesting aspect of this narrative is its effort to bring the Narrows into line with bolshevism. The pedigree of the party is established in a continuum which portrays the Narrows not only as faithful to Marxism and the proletarian internationalism of the Second International, but also praises their early orientation towards Leninism and the fact that the party became a co-founder of the Third International. Professing Leninism, Sharova also castigates the Narrows for instances of inflexibility and shortsightedness, citing, for example, their failure to grasp the importance of the peasant question and develop “an appropriate Marxist relationship to it” as Lenin did.²⁹ Further, Sharova takes them to task on the issue of temporary compromises with bourgeois parties as a tactical maneuver in order to achieve a change of government. She estimates that the “revolutionary Marxists,” (i.e., the Narrows)—a failed denomination since it was as much the Broads as the Narrows who were in favor of evolutionary, legalistic socialism—were correct in their intransigence against solutions that would have compromised the party and its proletarian character at this early stage and would only be to the benefit of the bourgeoisie. However, contrary to Lenin, the Bulgarian “revolutionary Marxists” did not demonstrate sufficient tactical skills, and they rejected compromises altogether without “distinguishing between revolutionary compromises, which serve the purpose of the proletariat, and conforming compromises, which subjugate the working class and its party to the bourgeoisie.”³⁰ Great assistance in the struggle against opportunism was given by the writings of Plekhanov and Lenin. *Iskra* and *What Is To Be Done?* served as models and provided arguments

against the Broads, since the internal struggle in Bulgaria was similar to the struggle against the Economists in Russia.³¹ Concluding, Sharova praises the non-reconciliatory activity of the Narrows towards the bourgeoisie and the enemies of socialism, which did a great service to the social-democratic cause, and facilitated the later orientation of the party towards bolshevism. "It should not be overlooked that the Narrows liberated the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party from opportunism at the moment when German social democracy could not decide to exclude Bernstein from its ranks."³²

There is a tendency in Bulgarian scholarship to associate the Broad dissent with the rise of economism in Russia. The two phenomena share, however, common ground only to a limited extent. Both represented a kind of theoretical modification related to the international controversy triggered by the revisionist debate. Nevertheless, both were stimulated by country-specific developments in their respective socialist movements, and represented rather local reactions than an immediate reflex of revisionism. Economism was the result of the changing character and composition of Russian social democracy around the turn of the century, as it was transformed from a clique of intellectuals to a dynamic movement that brought a significant segment of the intelligentsia in constant contact with the workers. Theoretical premises within Russian social democracy remained unchallenged as long as socialism was restricted to circle work. This certainty, however, was contested when intellectuals turned to agitational activity, and discovered that workers had ideas of their own with respect to the needs of and the course to be taken by the socialist movement. Workers seemed to appreciate the merits of economic struggle (higher wages, shorter working hours and other material benefits) as a value in itself, favoring trade unionism, while remaining indifferent to the long-term goals of political struggle. Moreover, workers refused to be led by an intelligentsia that regarded economic struggle merely as a "springboard for a political revolution." The majority of the social-democratic intelligentsia capitulated. "Taking the existing level of worker consciousness as the touchstone, they showed willingness to yield to the workers themselves the ultimate determination of the direction of the movement. This relationship mirrored the altered composition of the Russian social democratic intelligentsia, with the working class increasingly dominant and the intelligentsia less and less in control. Instead of directing the movement into

channels chosen on the basis of Marxist theory, they allowed themselves to be guided by the spontaneously arising demands of proletarian consciousness." The "capitulation" of the intelligentsia was mainly due to the fact that the most authoritative group of intellectuals was in jail, while the younger members were inexperienced.³³ The similarities with the Bulgarian case consist in the fact that both the Economists and the Broads tended to emphasize experience, and *de facto* downgraded abstract theory. Both adopted a "learn from life" attitude and demonstrated an inclination to take prevailing circumstances into consideration by making concessions to the wishes of the social subjects they were called to represent. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned morphological and rather superficial similarities, significant differences existed with respect to the content of economism and Broad socialism. In the case of Russia the preeminence of economic struggle and the downgrading of the political aspect of socialism were emphasized. Exactly the opposite was the case in Bulgaria, where Broad socialism laid a claim for the *upgrading of political struggle*, to be achieved though a temporary coalition of all "productive strata." In the case of Russia, it was a concession to the trade-unionist attitudes of an ever-growing workers' movement; in the case of Bulgaria it was triggered by the "absence" of a strong and articulate working class. Moreover, in the case of the Broads, it was not necessarily a "capitulation" to the desires of the majoritarian petty producers beyond the workers' milieu, but rather an attempt to provide them with a positive and inclusive role in the socialist project. Nor was Broad socialism, despite an inclination towards pragmatism, void of theoretical preoccupations. The Broads contested abstract theory to the extent that it became an all-inclusive straight-jacket. On the other hand, they demonstrated a willingness to delve seriously into theory, showing at times a limited capacity for original reflection, certainly more productive than the reasoning of Blagoev, who casually rebuked his opponents with seminarian zeal by quoting extensively from the infallible big masters.

The best scholarly account of the schism and the development of the Broads as a socialist party after the schism is Klara Pinkas' work, *Reformistkata Sotsialdemokratsiia v Bŭlgarija. Ideologiia, Politika, Organizatsiia 1903–1917*.³⁴ Despite the fact that Pinkas also pays lip service to the argument of opportunism, her narrative is balanced and extensively researched.³⁵ Pinkas sets out to answer an important question: why,

after such a determined and ferocious struggle of the Narrows against the Broads, did the latter manage to survive as an independent political entity?³⁶ For Pinkas, the roots of the split have to be sought in the differences already manifested in the inception of the party in 1891. The differences that triggered the split between Party and Union contained in embryonic form the crucial questions that came up at the end of the 1890s, like the character of the party, the tactics to be adopted, and the social subjects that were inclined to be the Socialists' supporters. What was expressed embryonically among the Unionists altered after 1894 into a "strengthened opportunistic tendency." Pinkas overemphasizes the elements of continuity between the Union and the Broads; she is right, however, in diagnosing a seed of continuity in the consistency of preoccupations that characterized both forms of dissent. Pinkas also places the phenomenon of Broad socialism within the broader scene of "international opportunism,"³⁷ but also points at the domestic reasons that gave rise to the reformatory wing of the party. She indicates the problem of backwardness and the lack of a solidified and strong industrial proletariat, due to the agrarian character of the country, whose "proletariat" was of a varied, mainly agrarian and artisan nature.³⁸

Equally well researched—but with a different emphasis—is Sina Maria Dubowoj's unpublished doctoral thesis, *The Schism in the Bulgarian Socialist Movement and the Second International, 1900–1914*.³⁹ Dubowoj concentrates predominantly on the relationship between the two factions and the International Socialist Bureau (ISB)/IS.⁴⁰ She concludes that the former not only failed to undertake any serious effort to reconcile the two factions, but on the contrary, the struggle between the two factions for international recognition deepened the feud between them. On the issue of the schism, Dubowoj concludes that "all too human factors, such as jealousy, competition and intolerance underlay the ideological differences between the Broads and the Narrows before and after 1900, when the split formally began."⁴¹ Although Dubowoj acknowledges "the dissatisfaction with rigid dogmatism" created within the party, as manifested in the agrarian controversy and the dispute over the freedom of the press, she seems to attribute too much emphasis to the personal factor. As for her argument that the ultimate proof of the ideological kinship of the two factions is the "fact that after 1903, the two parties in practice followed identical courses and modeled themselves upon Western European Social Democratic parties,

especially the SPD”⁴² comes as no surprise and was to be expected. The debate between the two factions was not about Marxism versus non-Marxism, but rather about the appropriate understanding and application of Marxist principles in Bulgarian society. The Broad dissent related to short-term temporal adjustments, not to the basic, long-term end goals of Marxist theory.

2. Bulgarian Socialism

Early Bulgarian socialism is a neglected subject.⁴³ This remissness is mainly due to the fact that Bulgarian historiography has concentrated overwhelmingly on the establishment of the Marxist paradigm, considering the preceding period “non-scientific,” and thus uninteresting. This unfortunate circumstance has created a distorted picture of the early period, which is regarded as a juvenile episode, coming of age only in the establishment of the Marxist paradigm.⁴⁴ The early period, extending from the 1880s to the early 1890s was extremely colorful, eclectic and syncretistic. Diverse ideas from various paradigms (Proudhon, Lassalle, Blanc, Bakunin as well as Marx, Lavrov, etc.) coexisted, while the passage from the predominantly populist-orientated socialism to Marxism was slow. The Gabrovski of *Nravstvennata Zadacha na Inteligentsiata* (1889), the Blagoev of *Sŭvremeniŭ Pokazatel* (1885),⁴⁵ the Dabev of *Siromashka Pravdina* (1890) and the Boinkov of *Svobodi Misli* (1889) were not formed Marxists, if Marxists at all. The 1880s represent the formative period of a whole generation of intellectuals who later developed almost *en masse* into Social Democrats. Acquaintance with populism in its Russian, but also in its Bulgarian version, as formulated in the movement of Spiro Gulapchev,⁴⁶ left a long-lasting imprint on this first generation. This was manifest in the first place in the ideological sphere, in the way socialist intellectuals selectively resorted to this earlier ideological arsenal and made use of populist rhetoric in framing a laic understanding of socialism, predominantly for propagandistic purposes. Populism was equally catalytic for the self-understanding of these intellectuals as engaged, political human beings. The populist claim for immediacy, of the intellectual “going to the people,” remained a thin, but determining, element in the background, even when Marxism gained the upper hand. Also residual was its equivalent, that is, the belief in the self-directive role of the people towards emancipation, in other words, the practical tendency of populism. Last, but not least, as we will observe below, the Bulgarian Social Democrats found themselves in the precarious position of resorting

to populist themes, almost by default, that is, because they were constrained by the egalitarian structure of Bulgarian society. The change of the dominant paradigm (from populism to Marxism) also signified a change in the usage of analytical categories. The intellectualized and thus abstract passage from “the people” to “class” posed less of a problem for Bulgarian intellectuals, who managed to fathom the Marxist narrative by the mid-1890s. The problem consisted rather in constructing meaningful political subjects with the help of these same analytical categories. What proved equally challenging was the change in the description of time, represented by the two different paradigms. Populism represented an “elliptic” future, that is, a condensed and accelerated passage to the future by means of a strong leaning on a paradigmatic past. It was precisely this “speedy” passage that raised the horizon of expectations and constituted the strength of the populist revolutionary imaginary with respect to apocalyptic revolutionary time. Marxism represented a “syntactic” future, that is, a linear law-abiding conception of time sequences, following strictly upon each other, determined not by individual voluntarism as in the case of populism, but by the “objective” axioms of historical inevitability. For the Social Democrats, revolutionary time could not be sublimated but only anticipated. The voluntaristic revolutionary aspect was to be reintegrated in Marxism with the amendment of Leninism.

The gestation of the Bulgarian socialists took place at a significant turning point in the international socialist world. At the ebbing of the 1880s the populist paradigm was in decline, and by turning to Marxism the Russian socialist *émigrés* group around Plekhanov dropped the previous persevering motif of a “particular Russian road to socialism.” The establishment of Marxism in Bulgaria developed to a great extent through the Russian connection, and Plekhanov’s polemics with the home populists served as a model for Blagoev’s rebuttal of the Russian populist *émigrés* in Bulgaria.⁴⁷ More significantly, the successes of the German Social Democrats established a wholly new international example and it was their program that the Bulgarian Socialists adopted as a blueprint for their movement.⁴⁸ Germany served not only as a model for a successful socialist party, but also as an example for speedy and efficient industrialization.

The initiative for the founding of the Social Democratic Party is dated around 1890. By that time several local circles of socialist intel-

lectuals existed in numerous towns, which had as yet not managed to coordinate their activity. They lacked a clear ideological identity, while socialism was promulgated—in an enduring tradition from the liberation period—more in the spirit of the Enlightenment, that is, as a vehicle for the promotion of knowledge and education. Ideologically, they represented a mixture of diverse socialist influences ranging from Russian nihilism, anarchism and French socialism, to pre-Marxist German socialism (Lassalle) and fragments of Marxist thought. As already mentioned, the most conspicuous influence remained Russian populism. These socialist groups centered often on young graduates from abroad (Gabrovski, Dabev, Blagoev, Sakūzov and others), or were based on homebred production (Bozveliev and Mutafov, for example, did not study abroad), and were founded predominantly on the initiative of teachers. They developed a minimal publication and translating activity and functioned—also in continuation of the culture of the liberation period—as reading rooms and discussion circles. By the end of the 1880s, the city of Gabrovo had developed into a significant center of socialist intellectual activity, radiating influences to the nearby regions and cities.

Despite the presence of some reluctant voices, claiming the creation of a socialist party to be premature, a handful of intellectuals—on the initiative of Gabrovski—came together in Buzludzha, near Sofia, in July 1891 and unanimously (even the skeptics joined in) founded the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party. At their second meeting, however, at the Second Party Congress in Plovdiv, held in August 1892, those who had opposed the founding of the party in the first place came up with renewed resistance (Bozveliev, Mutafov, Sakūzov, Dabev and the Geneva Group). They found the organization of the party premature and argued for the precedence of systematic propagandistic and organizational work. The two fronts failed to reach an agreement and parted ways. Between 1892 and 1894, they functioned as two independent socialist entities, the Social Democratic Union (*Sŭiuz*) and the Social Democratic Party (*Partiia*).

This first schism was short lived, and under the pressure of increased political reaction the two groups fused into the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party in 1894. The Social Democrats fast and unexpectedly scored several electoral successes. In 1894, two Socialists were elected to the parliament; by 1899 there were six. In the

1902 election, eight Socialists were elected to the *Sŭbranie*. Lingering disagreements within the party came to a head in 1900, when Janko Sakŭzov started publishing, on his own initiative, the semimonthly journal *Obshto Delo* (Common cause), an act that triggered the immediate reaction of Blagoev, and was to be the starting-point of a three-year long theoretical confrontation that split the party intellectuals into two groups: the Broads and the Narrows. The Narrows accused the Broads of theoretical deviation, of abandoning Marxism and having steadily transformed themselves into petty-bourgeois democrats. The Broads in turn accused the Narrows of theoretical dogmatism and petrification. In 1903 the final act of the schism was played out in the Sofia party organization. A group of about 50 members—followers of Blagoev—seceded and demanded independent recognition, arguing that the Sofia organization failed to abide by the resolutions of the Party Congress on the necessity to recenter the party's activity upon its true, proletarian base. Their application to the Central Committee for recognition as the official organization of the capital was granted due to the Committee's control by the Narrows, and the organization of the Sofia majority was dissolved. In a domino effect, all of the country's local organizations were asked, by the Narrows, to declare allegiance to one or the other faction, which brought an almost equal number of organizations to both sides. Appeals for reconciliation by the Broads failed, and the two organizations started functioning as two independent social-democratic parties.

3. *Sŭiuz* vs. *Partiia*: The Priority of Political or Economic Organization?

The initial attempt to create a social-democratic party in 1891 found a number of intellectuals in disagreement. Conditions in Bulgaria were still immature for the official entry of the Socialists into the political scene. There was always the problem of reaction and persecution, but, above all, there was as yet no sufficient social material—workers—who could function as the party's army. The Unionists deemed it thus more appropriate to start by laying the groundwork, by educating workers and assisting their economic organization. The *Sŭiuz* (Union) was to function as an association, a society for the propaganda of socialist ideas and was to concentrate its principal activity on the creation of syndicates. The Union developed its organizational conception leaning on the guidelines of the Bulgarian student group in Geneva (Rakovski, Balabanov, Nokov), itself under the influence of Akselrod. The impending task of the Bulgarian socialist intelligentsia was to unite into a social-democratic union, an assembling point of all revolutionary forces that would function as a bridge, connecting the proletariat with its own revolutionary ideology. Agitation and propaganda should go hand in hand with the organization of the workers.⁴⁹ The Geneva group espoused an "orthodox" scenario, whereby the strength of socialism depended upon the perseverance of capitalistic production and was to be represented by the objective numerical strength of the proletariat. On the basis of intensified social conflict, the spontaneous syndicalist organization of the workers, assisted by the socialist intelligentsia, was to acquire a political character, and ultimately contest the political hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Their blueprint envisioned two steps. In the first place, the intelligentsia (including students, teachers, etc.) organized separately or entered the ranks of the local workers' organizations. In the second, the workers organized in professional organizations of a predominantly educational and economic character, and moved progressively to more sophisticated and elaborate forms of organization, like nation-wide professional federations. Under the influence of socialist propaganda, workers were to realize the necessity to exceed

the limits of everyday economic struggle and destroy the capitalistic order. At precisely this point, the now imbued class-conscious workers were to enter the political arena as an independent political force.⁵⁰ The Union saw its initial task in uniting all existing socialist groups and was to center its activity on propaganda among workers, helping them unite—according to the degree of their class-consciousness—in economic organizations. On the basis of real class conflict, the socialist intelligentsia would inculcate the workers' movement with revolutionary theory and help workers' organizations develop a class political character. The final step would be to unite into the labor party, which would then enter into the phase of open political struggle.⁵¹

The Union versus Party debate, as a quasi "false" dilemma over the priority of economic or political organization—is representative of the predicament associated with the development of socialism in conditions of "backwardness." As a dilemma, in the accentuated form it took, it could only arise in countries where the prevalent socio-economic conditions did not allow for the simultaneous realization of both, since political and economic organization do not represent two antithetical, but two complementary, aspects of the labor movement. The debate in all its insignificance was a first signal of the different perceptions that intellectuals would develop on what constituted Bulgarian "reality" and how to go about the realization of the socialist ideal. This first confrontation also posed some significant and persisting questions: was socialism in Bulgaria the "natural" consequence of the effects of capitalistic development, or did it still represent an intellectual movement? Was the viability of socialism as a movement connected primarily to social processes, or predominantly to political causes? What was to be the character of the Social Democratic Party and whose class interests could it possibly represent? Both positions were to test the limits and the viability of their theoretical assumptions in the short period of their independent existence. As maintained by Bakalov, "[The Union's] principal goal was the creation of a mass workers' movement. The Party was a social democracy without workers and ran the risk of degenerating into a peasant and artisan party, as soon as it attempted to exercise political influence and win over the popular masses."⁵² As will become evident from the following analysis, in this initial phase the faction of the socialist movement that seemed to adhere in stricter terms to theoretical orthodoxy—a socialist movement built from the

base—was the Union (Sakŭzov, Bozveliev, etc.) rather than the Party (Gabrovski, Blagoev, etc.). This circumstance calls into question the linear construction (see Mitev) that views the Union as having deviated theoretically and “logically.” Rather, it was the Unionists’ initial purism that led them to the realization of the necessity of approaching theory more creatively and compromise with given realities.

In its programmatic article in *Drugar* (Comrade),⁵³ the Union declared its commitment to the theoretical foundations of scientific socialism, stating that “in capitalistic countries the economic struggle of the workers against their masters turns by necessity into a political struggle ... [E]very class struggle is political struggle.”⁵⁴ Though the prevailing socio-economic conditions in Bulgaria were slowly changing, it could however be observed that small—rather than big—scale remained the predominant form of production. “Capitalistic production does not as yet occupy a big space.” Small producers, comprising a large contingent of the working population, slowly abandoned their independent livelihood; there as yet existed, however, no factories or big workshops that brought workers together in socialized labor. The emphasis was laid on the transitional nature of the epoch:

The economic process taking place today in Bulgaria *destroys the old [structures] without either forming or immediately consolidating new ones. The old forms do not disappear that quickly and the new ones do not take root that quickly either. In such a transitional phase the working population is disoriented.* The ruined small producers do not give up hope of becoming independent owners, and the developing capitalism is not yet capable of entangling them in its iron embrace. Our working population consists of thousands of small producers either ruined or on the verge of ruin, thousands of apprentices striving towards independence, and thousands of hired laborers in factories and the new manufacturing workshops, who do not feel like a united working mass, nor like a separate working class with its own dominant interests. In other words, our working population is extremely heterogeneous and as such does not yet have a class-consciousness.⁵⁵

The development of workers’ class-consciousness went normally hand in hand with their baptism into the economic struggle. Bulgaria also had witnessed such sparks, but they were “singular explosions without energy, without consistency, without a general plan,” which was primarily due to the absence of syndicalism. “Without economic organizations there can be no energetic class consciousness and without

class consciousness there can be no political activity; otherwise it turns into a farce, a comedy or a puppet game.” Professional organizations aimed at ameliorating the workers’ social and working conditions; the economic struggle between worker and capital was an everyday struggle. Economic struggle, however, could ameliorate the situation of the worker only to a certain degree; it could never liberate the worker fully. For this purpose, political struggle was necessary. The relationship between the everyday economic struggle, and the general political struggle was intricately interconnected:

The first is taking place every day, the second is periodical. Where there is no everyday economic struggle, there can be no periodical political struggle either, since it is inconceivable that where there are no workers striving and fighting for a better life, there would be conscious working-class struggle. If in a country the workers have not succeeded yet in organizing themselves for economic struggle, it follows logically that they will not succeed in organizing themselves for political struggle either; if in a country the economic organizations that direct the everyday economic struggle of the workers are missing, there can be no mentioning of political organizations, of a political party of the workers. This is the view of scientific socialism, and it cannot be otherwise. *It cannot be otherwise, because reality is not much different and it is imperative not to forget reality, for this is the first postulate of scientific socialism.*⁵⁶

Emphasis was laid on the objective conditions that imposed on workers the urgency to enter energetically the field of economic struggle and “forced” them into syndicalism. Otherwise:

For if a socialist claims that in such countries there can be no syndicates due to the small numbers and the distribution of the workers, [he] is automatically claiming—unintentionally—that in such countries *small production is still dominant and that consequently, socialism is rather an intellectual engagement than a workers’ movement* ... Without industrial workers there can be no workers’ movement; without workers’ movement there is no class struggle, and without class struggle, political struggle turns into a puppet game. Wherever industrial workers are absent, there is no sharply defined economic struggle. Workers confuse their interests with the interests of their masters, *which means, that in such a country where there is no workers’ movement, there is no defined working class.*⁵⁷

The Union did not reject political struggle, nor did the Party deny economic struggle. While the Party argued that political struggle was

a higher form of development, helping workers to develop their class-consciousness, and was, for this reason, of superior significance than that of the simple economic struggle, the Union refused to consider the economic and political factors in binary terms. The workers' economic struggle was the first signal and the most convincing evidence of the sprouting of capitalism, an unending struggle that would last until the final destruction of capitalism, and moreover, it was a struggle "naturally" imposed by economic conditions. For this reason, arguments about a superior and subordinate significance were out of place. Both forms of struggle were important. Political struggle at a certain point of development of the working class opened up new spheres of influence for the workers. Consequently political struggle could never be impaired by or replace economic struggle. The goal of political and economic struggle could be one and the same, but the means they made use of and the results they achieved were different.⁵⁸

The Union emphasized the necessity that conscious political struggle be led by the workers themselves and should correspond to their needs. The Union was not against political struggle in general terms, but rather against a political struggle that was led in the name of the workers, however, without their participation. In the same article—written most probably by Sakŭzov—the author emphasizes the significance of Marxism and the necessity of adapting it to the concrete conditions of Bulgarian reality. The theory is given, but the application of the theory in each context had to be specific. It is an article from 1893, but it could as well have been a passage from the 1903 debate. The line of argumentation is strikingly similar:

*We are Marxists. Marxism is a theory arising out of the conditions of life itself. If we exclude the general conclusions of Marxism, which are the same for all countries—where capitalistic production has developed or is in the process of developing—the tactical strategy that a Marxist organization has to follow is conditioned by the sum of the political and economic particularities specific to each country. Because we, Bulgarian Socialists, while paying tribute to what is common with other countries, have to estimate our conditions with precision if we wish to be successful in the application of these general principles in our country. This determines also the details of our activity and the correct understanding of the above conditions will determine our success. Even more we have to bring these conditions into tune with our end goals if we wish our activity to bare satisfactory results.*⁵⁹

Neither the Union nor the Party were particularly successful in their attempts to inaugurate an independent existence. The prevalent social conditions justified rather the rational of the adherents of the Party faction. The lessons that were drawn by the Union, in its attempt to set up a socialist movement *from the base*, are summarized to the point by Bozveliev:

This one-year socialistic experience showed us, however, that the creation of political organizations is comparatively much easier than the creation of economic ones. Political organizations could be formed with people from different economic categories. Independent, hired, or intellectuals, it was enough that they accept socialism, while economic organizations—syndicates and associations—had to be formed from hired [laborers]. The dissatisfaction with the tyrannical regime of Stambolov drove many, mostly intellectuals, to become socialists or to declare themselves followers of socialism. Because of this, socialist political organizations had a greater chance to develop. The only question is, how far can a party, even if it is called “socialistic,” be a “class” party, when consisting of such a variegated composition, and where the working element, namely hired labor, is so weakly represented.⁶⁰

4. Blagoev vs. the Narodniks

The establishment of the Marxist paradigm in Bulgaria has more or less accurately been credited to D. Blagoev. Although a similar ideological fermentation was taking place simultaneously among several of his colleagues—the late 1880s and early 1890s witnessed a slow shifting of paradigms and an ever greater orientation towards Western Marxism—Blagoev was pioneering in articulating and putting on paper a first analysis of Bulgarian socio-economic development within the trajectory of international capitalism. So indeed, his was the first attempt to conceptualize the development of Bulgaria within an evolutionary scheme of history, whereby Bulgaria was not to follow any original developmental course, but would inevitably follow in the footsteps of European civilization and the path that more developed countries had crossed in the process of their socio-economic evolution. Blagoev had probably read Plekhanov's *Our Differences* by the end of the 1880s. It formed part of the literature with which the Geneva group was familiar and which it disseminated to local groups in Bulgaria. He wrote *What is Socialism* under the influence of Engels' *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* and the *The Communist Manifesto*. Blagoev defended his thesis in 1891/1892, arguing not against local populists as would be expected, but rather against the Russian populists resident in Bulgaria at the time.

In *Shto e sotsializŭm i ima li toi pochva u nas?* (What is socialism and has it started in Bulgaria?)⁶¹ Blagoev established the Marxist paradigm by arguing against the voluntaristic establishment of socialism, that is, the conviction that the future of the country and the dissemination of socialism depended on the will and the action of the intelligentsia. He argued not only about the scientific basis, but also about the historical inevitability of socialism as the result of a law-abiding process in the development of the relationships of production and the prevalence of capitalism. So “socialism [was] the result of the historical development of humanity” towards higher stages in productive relationships and the result of the capitalist socialization of labor. Blagoev's narrative con-

tained two very important aspects of popularized Marxism that were to remain also as permanent traits in his socialist reasoning: historical and economic determinism and naturalistic evolutionism. Blagoev sought to prove that capitalism had started in Bulgaria and to confirm the Marxian dictum that as soon as a country has entered the "path of its natural development," nothing could divert it from its predetermined itinerary. So logically if capitalism had started, socialism had started too, since any change in the economic order automatically implied a change in the social order as well. The equation was valid the other way around as well: the dissemination of socialism depended on how fast or slow capitalism would develop in Bulgaria. (His thinking was characterized by a strong inclination for mathematical reasoning. It comes perhaps as no surprise considering the fact that mathematics was his strongest subject.) Moreover, as soon as socialism was established in one or two states, the rest would be forced to accept it and submit to the laws of evolutionary international development as well. It was, consequently, all a matter of time. In *Shto e Sotsializŭm* Blagoev totalized the automatic movement of objective social laws, establishing a faith in the revolutionary character of the development of the productive forces themselves, irrespective of other factors.

Blagoev's preoccupation was to demonstrate that post-liberation Bulgaria had entered the orbit of capitalism, that is, that the country was coming increasingly under the influence of foreign economic forms through the intensification of trade and foreign contacts. His strongest thesis, however, was to prove that capitalistic production was becoming the prevalent form of production in Bulgaria. He observed the deterioration of the older forms of production (guilds and crafts), the change in the patriarchal mode of life, the increasing influence of individualism, the intensification of moneyed economy, the increased competition with foreign products leading to the decline of the small cottage industry, the ruin of the small producers, the spread of factories, the creation of new commercial centers, the spreading of poverty, the division of the population into two classes (the capitalists and the proletariat), the concentration of the land and consequently the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a minority; these were all elements that testified to the change of the economic system. Despite his airtight Marxist argumentation Blagoev also showed some residues from previous socialist paradigms. His class analysis was rather simplis-

tic, in that society was divided between capitalists and the poor, that is, the proletarians. The end goal of socialism was the “federative union of productive communities,” while the influence of Lassalle was conspicuous as much in the role he attributed to the state, which had to protect proletarian interests through legislation, but also in the legalistic means through which he believed the proletarian majority was to take power.

From a present perspective, it appears that Blagoev was appropriately identifying the symptoms related to the disengagement of the Bulgarian economy from the Ottoman realm and its increased and intensified association with Western economies. But was all that a sign of a “real” change in the mode of production? That was the basic question on which his Russian *narodnik* adversary, Debogori-Mokrievic, alias Prokopiev, would challenge him. Prokopiev’s aim was to demonstrate that Marxism was not applicable in an agrarian country where capitalism was not adequately developed. He contested most strongly the land concentration thesis, the speed with which and the form that capitalism would take in Bulgaria, the direct causality between political and economic forms and stressed that Blagoev was applying ready-made social categories without relating them to his surrounding reality. Interestingly enough, precisely some of these critique points were to reappear during the Broad–Narrow controversy, not under the guise of populism, but as a result of the theoretical convulsion triggered by the revisionist debate.

The first point of rupture was the agrarian question.⁶² Prokopiev insisted that it was impossible to argue for the theory of an equitable socialization of labor regarding both the industrial and agrarian production. In the first case, socialization was related to the competition between mechanical and manual production; in the other, it was the result of the acquisition of land. For example, feudal lords had existed also in the Middle Ages and, moreover, land concentration in England had not been the result of the application of machinery. In France, for example, the quantity of petty agriculture had increased ever since the French Revolution and was predominantly due to the confiscation of big estates and their sale to the population. “In other words, in agriculture we do not observe any equivalent centralization as in industrial production.”

In possession of an adequate quantity of land to provide for himself, the peasant would not abandon his land easily and turn into a homeless proletarian, unless other reasons unrelated to capitalism, contributed. So, the poverty characteristic of the Bulgarian peasantry

was not the result of the prevalence of capitalism, but due to other circumstances. For example, the French peasant living in a country where capitalism was far more developed lived in essentially better conditions than peasants in Bulgaria, Russia or other underdeveloped countries. Nor was the spreading of usury a sign of capitalism. Both in China and India, where capitalism was not developed, symptoms like poverty and usury could be found in abundance. The poverty of the peasantry consequently was not evidence enough that capitalistic production prevailed in Bulgaria. There existed no peasant-proletarians deprived of land ownership as a result of the competition with mechanized production. Moreover, experience showed that there existed mixed forms of land tenure. In the United States big estates existed next to small estates, while in addition there were countries where small peasant owners lived well, like in France or the Czech lands. The passage from manual to machine labor would take time, and it was not out of the question that the peasants, realizing the advantages of the application of machinery, might opt for communal ownership.

Blagoev argued that there was a reciprocal connection between the development of capitalism and agriculture, since big mechanized industry radically expropriated the majority of the peasant population, completed the separation of agriculture from the peasant home economy and completely destroyed its roots. The laws of capitalistic development applied to agriculture precisely as in industry. They socialized everything, through the ruin of the small producers, the concentration of land in a few hands and the transformation of the peasants into an agricultural proletariat on the one hand and the augmentation of the industrial proletariat on the other.⁶³ Moreover, there was a clear and observable movement from a natural to a moneyed economy, which inevitably opened the door to capitalism. In Western Europe, the remnants of feudalism had impeded the development of capitalism, but such barriers did not exist in Bulgaria.⁶⁴

Prokopiev contested not only Blagoev's evidence, but also the conclusions that were drawn from that evidence. Was all this really a sign of a change in the mode of production, he asked.

And what do we see? The disintegration of the crafts due to external competition. The creation of some industries (mainly in Sliven), where predominantly children between the age of 6 and 14 are working, and the

pauperization of the peasants, where in the younger generation, the development of individualism is to be observed ... the crafts disintegrate not due to the local growth of factories and mechanized production (that is the development of capitalism), but from external competition. The peasants are ruined not as a consequence of the competition with big estates, worked with machines (that is capitalistic production), but from the burden of taxation, usury and other similar reasons ... All this might represent a good start for capitalism, but not for Marxism.⁶⁵

Prokopiev observed also confusion in the application of social categories by the Bulgarian Socialists. On the one hand and due to the lack of a proletariat, they directed their propaganda to the journeymen, and on the other they stuck to an evolutionary Marxist model, whereby manufacture would inevitably give in to capitalistic production. They made no effort to study the life and the morals of the journeymen, but simply appropriated the descriptions of Western Marxists.

What do you do with the journeymen if adhering strictly to Marxist theory? Nothing, of course. For according to Marxist theory, the journeymen are not fit for socialist ideas. The choice: refrain from spreading propaganda among them, or bring theory into accordance with the surrounding circumstances. But our Marxists act in an original manner: on the one hand they take the description of the journeymen as provided by Marxism and consider it accurate, and then they do a logical *salto mortale* and start speaking of propaganda among the journeymen.

A similar lack of correspondence between the Western experience and other regions could be observed with respect to the establishment of political formations.

From the study of the history of Western European states, science has come to the conclusion that the state developed out of patriarchal life. But we well know that neither the Romanian, nor the Serbian, nor the Bulgarian [states] came into being out of patriarchal life by themselves, but rather artificially, so to say. Further, science tells us that political freedom is conquered, let's say, by the bourgeoisie. But we see clearly in the case of Romania, which like a backward country composes of no bourgeoisie as a class, that quite broad political freedoms exist there ...⁶⁶

Prokopiev's main preoccupation was, of course, with contesting the applicability of Marxism in Bulgaria, but his observations of the contra-

dictions between theoretical prescriptions and their application allude to comparable dilemmas that were to resurface among the Bulgarian Social Democrats:

Or to wait until the economic development of the country is completed, which as the Marxists confirm will have as a result the dissemination of certain relevant ideas, or to introduce the ideals in society without taking under consideration the surrounding economic conditions which are not in harmony with Marxist theory. The reasons for and the logical lapses that are obvious in the thought of our Marxists are to be sought in this contradiction between theory and the surrounding life. All Bulgarian Marxism is based on the unsubstantiated assumption that in Bulgaria, capitalism will develop quickly. Our Marxists cannot but acknowledge the backwardness of our life in the present times, and in order to save their theory from failure, they move the center of gravity to the future. [T]o live exclusively in the future is impossible.⁶⁷

More than anything else, Prokopiev insisted that the diffusion of socialism in Bulgaria was the result of the labor of intellectuals rather than the natural result of the economic development of the country, as claimed by Blagoev: "How is this contradiction then to be explained that in Bulgaria the creation of small circles of socialists is supposedly the result of economic reasons, that is, capitalism; while in England, where capitalism is thousand times more developed, it could not produce a proper movement among the workers?"⁶⁸

5. Constructing the Social Subject: A Party with Two Voices

The predominance of Marxism and renewed unity in 1894, nevertheless, did not solve the big open-ended issues like the profile of the party, the identification of which part of the population should form its potential support base, or the strategy and tactics to be adopted. It was rather the baptism in the arena of concrete political practice that brought many socialist intellectuals to the realization of their own contradictory role, as they found themselves bearers of a theory castigating capitalistic development in a country in urgent need of economic growth. The Bulgarian Social Democrats found themselves in more than one precarious position. They were holders of a theory—a futuristic scenario—that prescribed in detail the development of industrial society, the society to come, but conveyed embarrassingly little about how to deal with their transitional future and its peculiarities. The Social Democrats were active amidst a population of peasants, small owners and producers, the social strata that, due to the worsening of their situation, were the major bearers of discontent and most likely to be the Socialists' supporters, but who according to the futuristic scenario were to perish—at least in their traditional form—in the modernizing process. In contrast to the Socialists, these populations were not looking into the future, but into the past, insisting on their pre-capitalistic mentalities, codes of behavior and professional ethos. The Socialists' time machine seemed trapped in the vacuum of a transitional present, where the certain future they were evangelizing was neither of great practical nor paradigmatic help.

These contradictions were resolved in the field of concrete practice through the adaptation of a double language. Whereas the Socialists' theoretical publications retained the standardized social-democratic idiom (e.g., *Novo Vreme*), the language of immediate communication (used in speeches, brochures, etc.) made elaborate use of the rhetoric and the themes of previous paradigms, especially from the populist arsenal. The everyday practice necessitated a medium of communication that could render socialism comprehensible to the public.

Themes from the revolutionary democratic legacy of the revival period (*Vŭzrazhdaneto*),⁶⁹ pauperofilia themes from the discourse of Spiro Gulapchev and motifs from populist socialism were present. As observed by Georgi Pŭrvanov, in this early constitutive phase (1890s) there was indeed a “separation between theory and practice, which was more beneficial than harmful.”⁷⁰ The party of the proletarian avant-garde rarely found itself speaking to proletarians and had, out of pragmatic reasons, to adjust its language, vocabulary and profile to the audience it was addressing.

It was not only difficult to bring a certain vocabulary over; this vocabulary had to be almost radically transformed. Characteristically, in one of the most common brochures for the popularization of socialism, *Koi na chiŭ gŭrb zhivee?* (Who is living on whose back?) by the Polish Socialist S. Dikštein, the translator found it necessary to explain in a footnote the meaning of the word “proletariat,” which was contained in the preface written by Plekhanov. “A proletarian is the person, *who does not possess neither land, tools, nor capital* and for this reason is forced to sell his working force, to become a hired laborer, *in order not to die of hunger*.”⁷¹ The concept “worker” was applied generously to include everybody involved in any kind of labor relations. Kirkov, in one of his numerous and popular humoresque rubrics in *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* (The Workers’ Newspaper), described a fictive scene in a local coffee-shop between a civil servant who doubted in the existence of workers in Bulgaria and the craftsman Gocho (Kirkov’s pseudonym). Gocho made a praising remark about the elegant and expensive suit of the civil servant and asked who made the suit. Upon the answer of the civil servant that it was sewn by a tailor, Gocho asked him what a tailor was, only so as to answer the question himself: the tailor is called a worker. “And so my brother, the person who sewed your garment in which you swagger around, is called a worker, and how many are there today in Bulgaria that sew garments? Let’s say at least three thousand. And how many are those that sew shoes and fur caps, build houses, plough the land, work in factories and workshops? They are ten hundred thousand and all are called workers.”⁷²

Bozveliev provides further testimony to the broad usage of the concept “worker”: “The word ‘worker’ at that time was understood by the majority not in the specific sense given by Marxist theory, namely a person hired by an employer. Then, the word ‘worker’ implied every

toiling person—be it a hired laborer, an independent craftsman or a peasant.”⁷³ Describing further the local conditions in his hometown of Kazanlūk, Bozveliev explained that the first workers involved in physical labor that were attracted to socialism were independent craftsmen and their sons. The president of the first board of the workers’ club was a teacher who had been dismissed from his position, while the rest of the members were all craftsmen. “Among the members of the club, hired craftsmen could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The artisans, due to their psychology, were the elements least devoted to socialism. As for industrial workers, it was out of the question. In Kazanlūk they almost did not exist. In the only existing spinning factory, the working force consisted exclusively of women and children, who regarded the owner as their benefactor.”⁷⁴

The discrepancy between the proclaimed proletarian character of the party and its actual composition was well known to the party intellectuals. The disparity between wishful thinking and facts was bridged through rhetoric. Blagoev, in his introductory speech to the 8th Congress of the BWSDP in Pleven, “*stressed the proletarian character of our party. Although a mass of impoverished small owners constantly join its ranks, the party remains a party of hired laborers.* As long as these small owners do not grasp the principle reasons for their ruin, they will always serve parties and governments, which have no intention of helping them. But, the day they will consciously enter under the proletarian flag, they will enter the real path towards their liberation from the shackles of capital.”⁷⁵ It was not, however, the proletarian flag that attracted members to the party. Around 1901, the party consisted of more than 50.3 percent of small owners and only 27 percent of workers.⁷⁶

If the definition of the category “worker” was difficult, the definition of “class” was even more precarious. In a great part of the agitational literature and press, “class” was substituted with definitions like *rabotnicheski narod* (working people), *trudiashti narod* (toiling people) or *rabotnoto naselenie* (the working population). The Social Democrats explicated in essence a discourse pertaining to a society of low social differentiation, where the dividing line did not run along a hierarchy of economic categories, but in a broad dichotomy between rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, haves and have-nots. They did not see the population they addressed as being divided along elaborate class terms, but in best populist manner as the whole toiling, suffering or poor people, or

anyone beyond or outside the ruling political, state and financial elite. Political subjects were created through a basic juxtaposition: unfounded privilege, usually associated with a battle between the state vs. real toiling people. At times the notion of class was applied rather generously, so, for example, Gabrovski coined the term class of usurers (*lihvarската klasa*) to define a cross-class category of people involved in the practice of money lending. Having identified the perpetrators—"innkeepers, merchants, officers, priests and teachers"—, Gabrovski claimed that usury "is practiced by all social strata in Bulgaria, *apart from the poor*."⁷⁷

Castigated was an expensive, socially indifferent state, privileging only certain sections of the population, with a superfluous, excessive and parasitic bureaucracy, fat state pensions, and excessive taxation on the shoulders of the weak. One of the best methods to trace this practical, populist language is the examination of the rhetorical devices used in texts destined for immediate communication with a constituency. In a resume for his voters, entitled *Kakvo svūrshiha deputatite тази година* (What did the deputies achieve this year),⁷⁸ Janko Sakūzov gave a retrospective summary of the activities of the socialist deputies in parliament. The text contains some of the basic themes of the socialist minimum program. It began with the affirmation that "the Socialists are the political party, which wishes the best for the peasants, handcrafts and the workers" and that "apart from the Socialists, there are no other people in Bulgaria today who so passionately fight for the poor." The task of the deputies was to be "real popular representatives (*narodni prestaviteli*), true defenders of popular freedom (*narodna svoboda*) and watchdogs of popular labor (*narodnii trud*)." After touching upon the constitutional issue and the necessity to expand constitutional freedoms, Sakūzov came to speak of the interests of the peasants: the communal right for self-determination and the necessity to create peasant credit institutions. Among the great needs plaguing the peasantry was the need for money. Heavy taxes, low prices for agricultural products and contretemps in the economy forced the peasant to turn to the usurer. "What the usurer means for our peasant is well known to everybody. There isn't a greater evil than him. The usurer is a vampire who sucks from the peasant, sucks until he becomes a carcass. A good government, acknowledging that our people consist mainly of peasants, should in the first place make sure to tear the peasant away from the usurer by providing for extensive credit institutions for them."

The critique was geared predominantly against state-perpetrated capitalism. The government declined to lower the taxes on the peasants, petty peasants and craftsmen, while fostering indiscriminately the development of industry by providing great financial alleviation for entrepreneurs. "In other words the government is ready to help the rich and deserts the poor to their own fate." The proposed measures evolved around one central idea: the simplification of the state machine, the reduction of exaggerated state expenses, which involved shortening the period of military service and the transformation of the army into a popular militia, and the reduction of the salaries of civil servants and officers, the king, ministers and senior officials. "A senior official and a civil servant receive a yearly salary which could feed 20 craftsmen families and 30 peasant households." It also entailed cutting down on the traveling expenses and daily allowances of deputies as well as civil service pensions.

The stratum that generates more expenses should be the stratum that pays them ... [That way] the people will pay less tax. Because it is not hard to prove that the great state expenses do not benefit the poor people but benefit the rich. They are the main perpetrators, and it is for their sake that all this is done.

The legislation of the rich is always such: it takes from the poor, to give to the rich; it protects the rich and throws the poor into the street. Why are we surprised that the poor pay abundant taxes and the rich few. The rich man is not crazy to burden himself when he makes legislation. On the shoulders of the poor man he places an entire rock and on his own shoulders only a gourd: pretending as if he would carry a burden too. Today's order is such that the poor man does all the work and the rich man makes use of it. The poor man falls and gets up again; the rich man is simply lazy ... only then will the *people* understand that their best friends are the Socialists. Only they care sincerely for the *people's well being* and their happiness. Only then our *working people* will understand that in Bulgaria as in other countries, *the Socialists are the ones who will save them from theft and poverty*.⁷⁹

It is hardly surprising that the contents of agitation were a contested issue within the party and were brought to the table again and again. Most recurrent was the admonition that agitation for public consumption should not conceal the maximum program nor fail to stress the long-term goals of socialism. Party members and intellectuals were frequently reprimanded on the basis of "flexible" strategies and were

reminded that they should not limit themselves to the minimum program, which was conveniently fashioned to suit concrete Bulgarian conditions.⁸⁰ The issue of *flexible propaganda* was to remain a controversial issue during the Broad/Narrow controversy. The Broads were charged with relying on tactics that were too “elastic.” As Bakalov, who at that time was aligned with the Narrows, claimed: “Our ‘broad’ socialists do not recognize one natural source of our movement—the proletarian class; they see in every situation a different source, according to the circumstances. In the more developed cities their socialism is proletarian, at least so they claim; in the small cities it is ‘broadened’ and becomes guild-like [*esnafski*]; in the villages again their socialism deteriorates to such an extent that it becomes peasantist [*muzhishki*].”⁸¹ Bakalov continued:

In the beginning of the socialist movement, the weak differentiation between hired and independent workers [has encouraged the use] of a rather unspecified vocabulary. It was joined later by the peasants, building the “popular mass,” or the so-called “working population” or simply the “people.” Since it could not find a differentiated proletariat, socialism started appealing to the “people.” Fractured through the prism of underdevelopment, socialism in the mass of its adherents becomes vulgarized: from an expression of the proletarian class movement and struggle, as it was transmitted to us from abroad, in Bulgaria it was transformed to the pain of the “poor people.” “The people” were imposed as an idol to which even the terminology of socialism was adapted: we started talking about the “class consciousness of the people.” This absurdity, conceived through an inconspicuous replacement of the proletariat with the people, permeated our adherents without provoking any kind of resistance, as something quite natural. It should be emphasized, moreover, that only in propaganda were proletarian-specific demands mentioned, while during agitation, they were lost, silenced under certain points of the minimum program, most suitable to attract the petty bourgeoisie.⁸²

6. Modernization

If Social Democrats in Western countries saw their principle task in exposing, analyzing and mitigating the exigencies of the modernization process, the Bulgarian Social Democrats had first to persuade the public opinion and their adversaries that modernization was the desired, necessary and unavoidable path for Bulgaria. To the lamentations of intellectuals regretting the loss of the previous patriarchal order and the “demoralizing” phenomena that accompanied it, the Bulgarian Socialists answered with a firm look into the future. Bulgaria sooner or later—preferably sooner—would develop along the lines of Western capitalistic civilization.⁸³ The Bulgarian Social Democrats were not combating capitalism, quite the contrary; they were praying for its accelerated development. The old forms of social and economic organization were already disintegrating, exacerbating the livelihood of a great part of the population. Phenomena like usury and indebtedness were growing out of proportion and local production could not compete with foreign products. Everything indicated that Bulgaria was now in the orbit of a new system. Capitalism was here and was here to stay. This had been the quintessence of Blagoev’s classic *Shto e sotsiializŭm*.⁸⁴ With the logic of a mathematical equation, mechanically abiding the laws of social evolution, Blagoev proved that capitalism had taken hold in Bulgaria and as a normative consequence, socialism had started too.⁸⁵

Nowhere did the contradictory role of social democracy become more evident than in the modernization debate. The legislation passed in 1894 for the support of local industry is exemplary.⁸⁶ The aim of the new law was to provide local industrialists with incentives so as to induce them to greater investments. As Gabrovski put it, the goal was “to support industry, or better to *create industry*” (emphasis mine). The law was drafted in the spirit of state “protectionism” and provided for tax alleviation, the custom-free importation of machinery and goods, the free use of railways, the commitment of the state to promote the manufactured products within Bulgaria, etc. These privileges would be

granted for a period of 15 years and addressed all entrepreneurs willing to establish industrial plants with a minimum capital of 25,000 leva or 20 workers.

In his critique of the proposed law, Gabrovski emphasized the one-sidedness of the measures. The state, under the pretension of supporting national industry (*narodna industriia*), was obviously favoring one specific class, namely factory owners and capitalists. The petty producer, craftsman, peasant and hired laborer had nothing to gain from this legislation; on the contrary, they would be burdened with even heavier taxation since they were the segment of the population expected to fill up the budget. The development of industry was not only privileging one social class, but would bring about the ruin of the crafts in Bulgaria, which were already devastated by external competition. Such a law would accelerate the ruin of small production and the concomitant creation of a proletariat. By supporting only one class, economic progress would be accelerated, but would also equally contribute to the process of social decomposition, separating society in two camps: the capitalists, armed with all the privileges of the state, and the “ruined population of workers,” for whom the state proved to be only a bad stepmother. The following passage contains a number of similarities with the language and the vocabulary of the Serbian Radicals that we encountered in the previous chapter: “The state becomes a class state. It becomes the defender of the rich class in society and not of the whole people [*cheliia narod*]. This is not a peoples’ state [*narodna dŭrzhava*], despite the fact that the working people [*rabotniia narod*] carry it on their shoulders.” The state becomes a class state in which a reciprocal relationship existed, where the rich connected their interests with the state, and the state in its turn, came to the assistance of the rich. However, Gabrovski had to indirectly acknowledge that the options were limited. It was a subtle contradiction. On the one hand he castigated a state that fostered capitalism and assisted in the devastation of certain social strata, and on the other, he had to admit that there was no other direction available than the Western developmental paradigm, which inevitably would lead to the ruin of these same strata. In a laconic “we simply notice the facts” acknowledgement, he noted:

But when I said that this law [fosters] the development of capitalistic production in Bulgaria, while the handcrafts are destroyed, and when I said that such privileges help accelerate the creation of big industry, while the ruin of small producers is facilitated and a class of hired labor is created, *this does not mean that I am against mechanization, industrial production, and the development of industry in our country. We simply note the facts.* When we observe the objective course of our society, we say, that our country is going the same path as all other countries. *Industry will develop and will thrust our society in the same common European direction. The ruin of the crafts in their contemporary form is inevitable. The development of capitalism is also inevitable.*⁸⁷

By observing contradictions of this kind, it is possible to understand why or how theories of leaping ahead in evolution were ever conceived. The Bulgarian Socialists were confronted by the dilemma of development just as vehemently as the Serbian Radicals. How do you achieve a higher stage of economic development and at what cost? What is the social price of progress? In contrast to the Radicals, the Bulgarian Socialists had fully accepted the inevitability of capitalistic development; this however, did not absolve them from contradictions. They were not witnesses of a dynamic social process, upon which they simply called to intervene as observers or external organizers in opposition. On the contrary, they were contemporaries of an age and participators in the dilemma of how to achieve economic growth. This circumstance implicated them *nolens volens* in a relationship of complicity. Moreover, the dilemma of development was not simply of a technical nature, but of moral and ethical content as well. If Western Socialists found in Marxism more or less a confirmation of their social reality, the acceptance of Marxism by Socialists in less developed countries contained *ipso facto* a moral split, “a divorce between their ideal and their diagnosis of social reality.”⁸⁸ Gabrovski managed his way out of this logical incongruity by leaning on Lassalle. The leading role was attributed to the state as a mediating body. The state had to get involved in social processes, supporting equally the rich and the poor, which it created through its legislation and institutions. This should come as no surprise “if the state with its laws and institutions appears as a lever for the creation of social classes.”⁸⁹ Since the state contributed actively in the creation of social inequality, it was therefore compelled to intervene in the economic struggle boiling between the different social classes: between the poor

and the rich, the weak and the strong. "We think that the state should intervene in the interests of the whole of society, to the benefit of all the people and especially of the poor population, which carries the state on its shoulders..." Industrial growth could be achieved through state-sponsored workers' associations, which would manage production in a self-directive manner.

7. Mentalities

If one were to agree with Jacques Le Goff that “mentality is the story of tardiness in history,”⁹⁰ then the Bulgarian Social Democrats were up against a mental world that proved to be rather resilient. They not only had to face the fact that what they understood capitalism to be was not developing at the expected rate. They had to cope with the even more painful realization that the parts of the population exposed to it stuck to their own pre-capitalistic understanding of professional ethos, social status and social harmony. In fact, the Bulgarian lands within the Ottoman dominion had experienced a different kind of economic growth from approximately the 1820s to the 1880s. The proto-industrial development of artisan manufacture producing primarily woolen cloth, braid, shoes and ironware for the Ottoman market and the Sultans’s new standing army had provided an impetus for the growth and expansion of the local manufacturing industry base on a much greater scale than in the rest of the Balkan lands.⁹¹ This process was interrupted with the detachment of Bulgaria from the Ottoman economic and jurisdictional realm after the liberation. As regards the conditions prevalent in the beginning of the 1890s, Bozveliev provides a telling testimony:

At that time there were very few factory workers, because the factories could be counted in the fingers of a hand ... And the hired craftsmen—the apprentices—they lived with their own *guild psychology* [*esnafska psihologija*], carrying still the strong hope and conviction that their situation was temporary, transitional and that as soon as they learned their trade, they would become independent masters. In almost all of them simmered the dream of an independent shop or workshop with one or two apprentices around them. Despite the fact that in the majority of the cases this dream was smashed by the realities of life, the attempts to move in this direction did not cease. This was also the reason why whenever some kind of working association emerged, it soon collapsed, since the most proliferating workers in this organization, who were simultaneously also its leaders, were the first ones to dissent it in order to try their chances with an independent livelihood.⁹²

The workers in this [field of] production [i.e., the crafts] were still far removed from the psychology of the factory workers. They lived with the dream of becoming independent one day, a condition which some of them actually achieved. They considered their hired labor as something transitional, a temporal condition. As regards their master [*gospodar*], who worked alongside them, they did not look at him as an enemy or an exploiter, but as a teacher, as a master workman [*maistor*], who would “give them the profession, which meant bread in their hands.” Due to this labor psychology there were no big conflicts between master workman and worker. The centuries-old tradition in the handcrafts had made the worker modest, compliant, and ready for an easy agreement. The worker always thought that as an independent master workman of tomorrow, he would find himself in the same situation as his “master” of today, and he himself would have conflicts with the workers. Class-consciousness among workers could hardly develop under such conditions, because a clear demarcation line between master and hired laborer did not yet exist.⁹³

The socialist discourse emphasized the necessity for frugality, prudence and fairness. Its appeal rested on a moral imperative for justice. To speak of justice in a socialist discourse was stating the obvious, of course. The sense and contents, however, of this morality tale were not solemnly created by the Socialists. Rather, they appropriated a social sense of justice, as already existing mentality, as a “habitus,” integrating and harmonizing it with the socialist value system. In other words, the Socialists did not have to construct a feeling of injustice. This feeling was already present and related to changes in the social structure, which were perceived as destroying the “harmony” and the “equality” of a previous era. Here the rhetoric of the Socialists best demonstrated its populist qualities. It was particularly manifested in issues related to excessive privileges of state employees and the topic of unequal taxation. The reduction of the salaries of civil servants and the abolition of the law that guaranteed civil servants state pensions were among the principal socialist demands. As Gabrovski, in his speech in the 9th Regular National Assembly, explained:

This law is deeply unfair; and *does not meet the sympathy of the people*. The people see that the people who work the most, who become invalids, who age and die during their working lives are not secured by any means; nobody cares for them. For the peasant, who with bitter sweat drives the plough, and for the worker, whose hand is cut off by the machine, there

are no pensions. Their future is not secured in any way, while the future of the senior civil servants, who for 10 or 15 years make good money, build big houses and rent them out, is. Then they liberate themselves from the civil service, become stockholders in different societies, become entrepreneurs and usurers, who exist even today. *This fact shocks the popular feeling, the feeling of justice.*⁹⁴

8. The Profile of the Party

The most recurrent topos in the popular Bulgarian socialist narrative was the claim for economic frugality and prudence, coupled with the moral quest for social equality. Underlying most of the Socialists' concrete demands for reform, these were the principle values perpetrated by the socialist morality tale. It was like a metaphor for a "neat household," formulated in terms of the common man's logic and epitomized in the popular wisdom: "don't stretch your legs beyond your capacities." The most common quest of the Social Democrats was the necessity to cut down on superfluous expenses. It touched upon a whole series of privileges attributed either to individuals or institutions attached to the state and the royal court. It concerned the reduction of the state budget, the pensions and wages of civil servants, the salaries of ministers, the daily allowances of deputies, police wages, the number of district administrators and their personnel, officers' salaries, the reduction of the army, the king's civil list, the redundancy of state orders (awards), the reduction of the royal budget, the redundancy of new royal residences, or of excessive costs for the maintenance of the already existing ones. These claims were mostly clothed in a poignant rhetoric *against luxury and a dislike for laziness*, usually associated with unfounded privilege. The worthiness of a social subject emanated from his/her involvement in labor. Unearned wealth and unfounded privilege were perceived by the population and re-elaborated by the Socialists, as aberrant, unfair, demoralizing and corrupting, and, in their end effect, not pertaining to the egalitarian value system of the Bulgarian people. This sense of moral justice was epitomized in the cult of equality in poverty, where the state of being poor was elevated to an ultimate value and proof of honesty and industriousness.⁹⁵

The powerful image of the parasitic bureaucracy, a theme we encountered also in the discourse of the Serbian Radicals, was used effectively also by the Bulgarian Socialists. Attacking the law guaranteeing pensions to civil servants, Gabrovski argued against the unequal distribution of privileges, which promoted the creation of a separate

social cast while failing to provide similar awards for the working population:

With these pensions, you legislate a prerogative we all have to fight against, that is—the appendage to laziness ... For some time now, the people consider that the state has no right to load the expenses for the livelihood of one class on the shoulders of the working population. Especially today, when the people are enslaved not only through heavy taxes, but also through large debts and usury interests, which force them to abandon their land, their professions and take to the streets ... like the Roman slaves ... In moral terms, this means, that the law on pensions will have a far-reaching influence, since it will create among the people, and among the civil servants, a situation in which you guarantee the most unfriendly feelings towards the people ... and in moral terms: it develops servility through an external material reward and not through an internal acknowledgement of having fulfilled one's duty to the state and to the people.⁹⁶

While the social profile of the party was elaborated as the “party of the poor,” the political profile of the Social Democrats in the Bulgarian public sphere pertained more to that of a radical democratic opposition, castigating the violations of the liberal polity, than to a working-class party *stricto sensu*, not to mention a party of the proletariat. The Social Democrats’ political platform demanded the establishment of very basic constitutional rights and liberties, while the party acquired its political credentials through its relentless commitment to democratic institutions. The initial Liberal victory as expressed on paper in the founding document of the Bulgarian Principality, the Tŭrnovo Constitution (1879), did not live up to its postulations. Rather, its liberal premises were progressively jeopardized either by autocratic politicians or by the rising influence of the royal court. Bozveliev has commented on the significance of the Social Democratic Party for the Bulgarian public sphere:

It was obvious that the conditions had not matured enough for a workers socialist movement in Bulgaria. In this belatedly developed country of artisans and peasants, the old forms of livelihood slowly deteriorated and the new ones developed only slowly and weakly. Capitalism was rather weak in order to produce a strong and healthy proletariat through industry. And the socialist movement, to the extent that it existed, was purely an intellectual movement, carried by the intelligentsia, the most progres-

sive representatives of the bourgeoisie and mostly by the petty-bourgeois guild milieu, rising above personal and class interests. *The strength of socialism at that time lay somewhere else.* It consisted basically in the critique of Bulgarian reality. This reality contained nothing bright, nothing joyful in itself. This was the period of lawlessness, of the notorious “internal conviction.” The freedom of expression, of assembly, the privacy of correspondence—everything was suppressed. Communal autonomy ceased. The elections—legislative, communal and others—were a parody of elections. There was no oppositional voice in the parliament ... Socialist critique came like some kind of revelation in this strained atmosphere: it stirred up the sleepy society and gave courage to those who possessed a bit of a fighting spirit.⁹⁷

A whole range of the Socialists’ political agenda addressed issues of more or less “liberal” content. The freedom of the press and expression, the right of assembly, free elections, the inviolability of personal rights, the establishment of a truly representative electoral system, the necessity to curb electoral corruption, and the responsibility of the government and ministers were all measures that in essence could guarantee a basic and normal constitutional life. In 1902, Sakūzov explained in parliament that the Social Democrats were in essence completing and furthering the “liberal revolution,” they were doing the work of others:

It seems to me, without wanting to say big words, that the appearance of the Social Democrats in Bulgaria was a necessity, for they were the first, not to say the only ones ..., to point the finger at the social evils in our country. In essence the task of the Social Democrats in a country like Bulgaria or like Serbia would be to organize the emerging proletariat. But if we in this country take up the common tasks of our country, this is only because all our parties, all our social formations, neglected these tasks ... *This is your task not ours and when you fail to fulfill your duties, we do not come to your help, but to the help of our country, of our people and point out to you and to everybody your duties.* (Intervention by minister Dr. A. Radev: And you deviate from your principles!) *We do not deviate, but broaden out our general principles to the point as to carry out your tasks as well, when you prove incapable of grasping them...we are not only a party of the proletariat, but also a party of social development ...* [U]nder social development we understand the general cultural, economic and political development of a country ... but in Bulgaria for a long time now our social groups have not understood the tasks of our country, and we gradually got squeezed into foreign domains. In the domain of the democrats, in the domain of the Progressive-Liberals, we might even go as far as to become the most conservative party in Bulgaria.⁹⁸

The Bulgarian Social Democrats were at a crossroad. The times and the social composition of the country were more propitious for a radical democratic leftist formation, based on a broad coalition of the alienated segments of society, than for a strictly class party, which is how the Socialists perceived themselves officially. The tide seemed to be pushing the Social Democrats precisely in the direction of broad populism, which they had discarded at the beginning of their political career.⁹⁹ This circumstance provided for divergent visions of the party's scope, perceived by some as a broad field of action and possibilities, and by others as a cause for apprehension and a dangerous sliding into the "swamp" of radicalism. A fraction, headed by Blagoev, adopted a defensive attitude, insisting on theoretical purity and the necessity to barricade the party against the influx of "petty-bourgeois elements." Its opposite acknowledged the necessity to take the socio-economic structure of the country into account and viewed the broadening of the party as a unique opportunity to create a mass party, and to base socialism on a wider strategic coalition of the lower social strata, which in any case corresponded to the actual practice of the party. The tension between the proclaimed goals and the actual practice was clear, but remained unarticulated and in latent form within the party formation. The turning point to this uneasy, yet unchallenged, cohabitation came with the slow autonomization of the peasant movement in 1899.

9. Flirting with the Peasant

An unsettled, yet recurrent issue was the party's attitude towards the countryside. Despite warning voices that urged the development of a special agrarian program (for example at local congresses in Jambol and Tŭrnovo in 1895), addressing concrete peasant demands with the intention of attracting the peasants into the socialist camp, party congresses postponed any kind of serious deliberation between 1895–1898. It remained nevertheless, unofficially, contested ground within the party. Champions of an agrarian program like Gabrovski envisioned providing alleviating measures such as state subvention for the procurement of agricultural machines leased to individual peasants or whole communities on a low-rate basis, the foundation of agrarian banks, cheap and uncomplicated agrarian credit, the liberation of the peasant ownership from excessive burdens, the reduction and a fairer distribution of taxation and state support for agricultural cooperatives. In this field, most Socialists from agrarian countries found themselves on their own. Western social democracy never developed an appropriate and coherent theoretical approach towards the countryside, and to the extent to which it dealt with the topic, the solutions were barely applicable to predominantly agrarian societies. Catalytic, in this respect, was the influence of the SPD, which failed to address the agrarian issue, both in political and theoretical terms. Attempts to advance alternative positions, like the case of the Bavarian “Reformists” (Vollmar, Grillenberger, Ehrhart), who insisted on the necessity to include the peasantry without touching upon doctrinal issues, as well as the later attempts of the “Revisionists” (David, Ernst, Schoenlank), who contested outright the parallel and equitable development of the countryside along the lines of the industrial model, arguing against the concentration thesis, did not meet with particular success. Also the initial independent policies of the POF (*Parti ouvrier français*), which developed an independent agrarian program, were abandoned after the victory of doctrinaire orthodoxy in the SPD. The prestigious and authoritative position of German social democracy handicapped and discredited any variegated

approach on the agrarian question. However, what in the case of the SPD appeared as a second rate preoccupation—winning extra votes in the countryside and the necessity to consider the diverse social structure of the various component states of the *Reich*—was in countries of a predominantly agrarian composition, a priority issue.¹⁰⁰

The Bulgarian Social Democrats never developed a specific agrarian program, apart from including some peasant demands in their general agenda. Due, however, to the as yet decentralized structure of the party, members could avail of the freedom to approach the issue of propaganda freely while addressing their home constituencies. The relative “autonomy” of the local organizations allowed for variegated and “individualistic” approaches. Intellectuals like Gabrovski made use of their local political space to develop links to the radicalism in the countryside. His Tŭrnovo-based publication *Oslobozhdenie* (Liberation) was popular and successful. Gabrovski summoned around him a circle of pupils from the local gymnasium, enthusiastic about the ideas of Russian Agrarians like Maslov and Chernov, while in the late 1890s the group entertained intellectual links to local Agrarians like G. Nedialkov and Ts. Tserkovski, publishers of the *Selski Vestnik* (The Peasant Journal).¹⁰¹ Gabrovski was forced, however, to give up *Oslobozhdenie* in 1898, succumbing to centralization measures with respect to the party’s press.¹⁰² The debate over centralization and decentralization that erupted in the late 1890s was a first indicator of the diverging notions of how to go about the dissemination of the socialist ideal, and was intricately connected to the issue of agitation. Gabrovski argued that the local press was indispensable as it encompassed a larger social environment, avoided isolation, upgraded local and regional activity, and provided local socialists with initiative. *Oslobozhdenie* was geared mainly towards the peasants and the crafts, upholding the well-known Lavrovist motto of “all for the people, and all through the people.” It was fashioned to address peasant grievances and supported the idea of peasant syndicates and cooperatives, while Gabrovski altogether was in favor of specific programs fashioned to the needs of individual communities, while also strongly supporting the need for a general agrarian program. As regards Gabrovski’s “broad” inclinations, Blagoev emphatically declined to consider any expansion beyond the “true” environment of a social-democratic party.¹⁰³ While Gabrovski claimed that party tactics had to be attuned to the concrete

social conditions in every country, Blagoev insisted that tactics were independent of concrete conditions, and were general and applicable for all social-democratic parties everywhere. The issue of the press was not a question of tactics, but an issue of principles.¹⁰⁴ It should be emphasized, that control over the press developed into a most effective disciplining mechanism in order to curb and silence initiative, dissent and critique within the party. Gabrovski was the precedence case, to be followed, in 1900, by Sakūzov and *Obshto Delo* and, in 1905, by Bakalov and *Rabotnishko Delo*.¹⁰⁵

The resistance to an agrarian program was not negligible and was motivated predominantly by objections of a theoretical nature. Blagoev especially reserved a particular role for the ruined peasants. Not only were they by nature conservative, but the sooner they realized the predicament of their historical role the better, for they were to form the armies of impoverished proletarians rushing to the city, knocking at the door of big industry and forming the backbone of victorious social democracy. Capitalistic production had condemned the independent peasant to doom; small production was giving way to big production and small ownership to big land concentration. Evolution had to take its toll; society was to develop into a titanic dualistic struggle between capitalists and the proletariat. What was the purpose of giving the peasant false promises of salvation like the retention of the small peasant ownership? Not only did such a strategy contradict the iron laws of history, but retarded also the future victory of the socialist order. This is after all what socialism was about. The development from the feudal to the bourgeois order preconditioned the disappearance of the old forms of existence of the peasants and the crafts.¹⁰⁶ Similar “shortsightedness” and suspicion towards the peasantry was demonstrated also by the orthodox wing of the Serbian Social Democrats. The flexibility and inclusiveness of the pre-1904 generation receded with the victory of the purist fraction. Renewed attention towards the countryside as part of the policy followed between 1910–1914 demonstrated however a half-hearted commitment and an incapacity to delve seriously into the problems of the peasant world.¹⁰⁷ The Serbian Social Democrats, just as their Bulgarian colleagues, were not willing to accept the conclusions to be drawn by the Socialists’ electoral successes in the countryside. In 1912, the SSDP [Serbian Social Democratic Party] scored its greatest electoral success ever, by winning 29,037 votes, of which

4,250 came from the cities and 24,787 were cast in the countryside. The majority of the votes came from the better-off districts in Serbia (Podrinski, Požarevački), indicating that it was small and middle-class peasants that voted for the Socialists and not necessarily the agricultural proletariat. Poorer Serbian regions, like the Vranjanski okrug, provided the Social Democrats only with a small contingent of votes. Electoral preference for the Socialists was not necessarily a vote of protest, or an endorsement of the ultimate axioms of Marxism. Rather, the peasantry found the minimum program of the Socialists appealing and considered it a possibility in order to ameliorate its lot within the existing social order.¹⁰⁸ The growth of the Bulgarian Social Democrats in the countryside is attested also by Blagoev. In his eyes, it provided serious ground for concern:

During the period of the Radoslavov regime, especially in the last year of its duration, the Workers' Social Democratic Party grew really quickly. While in 1899, *until the sixth party congress* [in Gabrovo], the party organizations were only 30, during 1900, until the seventh congress, they grew to 64; That means, that the number of organizations doubled. It is only natural, that also the number of its active party members increased two and a half fold. According to the estimations of the Central Committee presented in the *seventh congress* [in Sliven], [the party] numbered 1,761 members. *But this growth did not spring from the big workers' centers, but mainly from the small artisan cities, and predominantly from the growth of purely peasant party organizations in Kazanlık, Haskovo, Tŭrnovo and other similar locations. The greatest party organizations were the ones assembling artisans, small owners and intellectuals from artisan cities like Kazanlık, Haskovo, Jambol, Vratsa, etc. On the contrary, the organizations in big cities were particularly weak. Because of this circumstance, the Workers' Social Democratic Party by its composition turned into a peasant-guild [selsko-esnafska] and intellectuals' party.* According to the estimations of the Central Committee during the *seventh congress* [Sliven 1900], the party consisted of: 496 hired laborers, 1,265 artisans, peasants and intellectuals. The last group being: 430 artisans, 250 peasants, that is all small owners, and 420 intellectuals ... If we keep in mind that the hired laborers emanated predominantly from the crafts and were under the influence of petty-bourgeois attitudes, then it is clear that the Workers' Social Democratic Party had turned into a petty-bourgeois party.¹⁰⁹

Gabrovski belonged to the most persistent and vocal champions of an agrarian program in the BWSDP, and for this reason his attitude towards the peasant issue deserves some closer attention. Gabrovski

did not rely on the inevitable scenario of capitalistic development that wished the peasant either to wither away or turn into a rural or urban proletarian. He advocated a rational organization of the agricultural sector through the introduction of modern agricultural techniques and the cooperative organization of the peasantry. In two articles entitled *Peasants and Socialism*,¹¹⁰ Gabrovski defined positively the role of the peasant for the broader socialist project in Bulgaria. He rejected the commonly held idea that the peasants “due to their interests and aspirations were opponents of socialism, real and in-born conservatives [and] sworn enemies of any change.” Gabrovski discarded the “stereotype” imposed on the countryside as the “nest of reaction” due to the retardation in the development of capitalism, the inadequate penetration of the enlightenment, and the general condition of backwardness with respect to the city.

Castigating the old parties for failing to develop an effectual agrarian policy, Gabrovski took them all to task, particularly for the disproportionate taxation imposed on the peasantry. What was even worse, the exuberant state expenses were financed almost exclusively through the pocket of the peasant without any reciprocal benefit for him. Taxed according to the principle “the peasant should mind his business and pay whenever and as much as is demanded from him,” all political parties demanded constantly rising contributions from the peasant world in order to manage the state. According to Gabrovski, the peasant paid the highest rate of tax in the state: approximately 20 times more than a civil servant and 6 times higher than a merchant or a factory owner. Equipped with old-fashioned tools, the peasant was unable to raise the level of agricultural productivity. Faced with the drudgery of having to pay 10–15 times higher taxes than in the Ottoman period, the peasant was brought to the verge of ruin. Logically, he had to earn his living by working for more powerful landowners or make his way into the city, where “slavery, worse than the Turkish example, awaits him.” Additionally to draining the peasant of his resources, the various governments of the old parties were assisting the concentration of the land into big *chifliks* (landed estates). Gabrovski concluded that “[o]nly one party can help them [the peasants]. The party that aims to change the contemporary order by handing over all land to the hands of the peasants who will own it commonly and will cultivate it with the biggest, newest and most useful machines while

benefiting from the fruits of their labor. This is namely what the Socialists are fighting for.”

Gabrovski distinguished three categories of peasant: the big landowners, the majority of small independent peasants, and the land laborers who were forced to sell their working force. The state, through its institutions, supported the big landowners, while legislative power was steadily concentrated in the hands of big entrepreneurs (landowners, merchants and factory owners) whose interests were antithetical to the interests of the working population. The common enemy of the petty peasants and the land laborers was capitalism in its various expressions. As a *chiflik* owner, enriching himself by stealing their labor, as a usurer by forcing them to sell their land in exchange for debt, as a merchant by selling overpriced goods, and finally as a capitalist state by bringing them to ruin through heavy taxes, “forcing them to build railways and roads, while the peasants themselves go on foot.” The state procured from the peasant not only his money, but also his blood by demanding protection from “internal and external enemies.” Economic factors and poverty, more than socialistic propaganda, were awakening the peasant, who demanded a fairer distribution of wealth. This condition created a new potential out of the “peaceful and submissive minds [and] the supporters of the old and God-given human slavery and burden.” Capitalism and poverty revolutionized the peasant, who abandoned his old frame of mind, “seeking salvation in a new, fairer order.” The peasants wanted control of the land against the infringements of the big landowners and sought alleviation from heavy taxation, long military service, and the arbitrariness of “various false patriots.” They sought to control the land freely (*svobodno da vladeiat*), cultivate it with less effort and to benefit from their labor. They wanted education, medical treatment and a midwife service in order to live as decent human beings. In one sentence, they want land and freedom (*zemlja i volja*). The reference to the narodnik organization here being more than coincidental. The peasants were fed up with the abuse, the theft and arbitrariness of the old parties and rightfully lost faith in them:

The new party, the Socialists, can accomplish that what cannot be achieved by the old parties. As the party of the poor, the Socialists understand the people’s needs and quests and strive for their materialization. If their discourse attracts the population and they are elected, this only

proves that socialism is the medicine for the wounds and pains of the poor and oppressed population. It proves that the Socialists seek that which is the interest of the laboring population. Herein lies the panacea for the fast dissemination of socialism in the village ... They discovered the big secret of human poverty, of suffering and injustice among the existence of private property, in hired labor, in living off the backs of others, and along with this, they showed the way for liberation through socialism. Finally, the peasant too, this old slave of land and society is awakening from the historical dream and is becoming conscious of his miserable position ... He, along with the city worker—his closest brother in battle—embraces socialism and enters the ranks of the new party.

Gabrovski is perhaps the most representative example of a socialist intellectual that tried to amalgamate creatively some aspects of the agrarian facet of the populist paradigm with the evolutionist scheme of social democracy. It should be remembered at this point that he acted as Bulgarian representative in several congresses of the Second International and, along with Dobrogeanu-Gherea, belonged to the strongest advocates of an agrarian program. They found nonetheless very little echo in the environment of the International. Gabrovski, however, did not limit himself only to a positive definition of the role of the peasantry. His *Parliamentary Speeches*¹¹¹ not only addressed important peasant issues affected by the current legislation, but indicated simultaneously practical solutions for the amelioration of the condition of the peasantry. “Regarding the law on usury”¹¹² Gabrovski attacked the government for intervening, but not actually eradicating, the problem of usury attacking the proposed measure (which would limit usury interest to 12 percent) as superficial and insufficient. It treated usury as an isolated practice and did not attack the problem at its root, for usury was the result of a whole cycle of economic problems related to the peasant economy. The peasant resorted to credit because he could not make ends meet and because his income did not allow him to secure his existence. The low productivity of agricultural labor, due to antiquated tools and production methods, the lack of markets, good communications, capital and other preconditions, along with the low price of foodstuffs, made it impossible for the peasant to survive. Having difficulty in accessing credit institutions, which were of greater use to the merchant and the civil servant, the peasant resorted to the usurer. The way out of this “misery” was to raise the level of agrarian culture, lower taxation, provide cheap and easy agricultural credit through agricultur-

al banks at low interest and no particular application formalities, raise the level of agricultural production and provide the peasants with agricultural machines. In the same manner as the state introduced legislation in order to foster national industry, it ought to introduce legislation in order to support agricultural cooperatives, while lowering taxes and caring for their fairer distribution among the population.

Although he agreed with it in principle, Gabrovski objected to the "Law on the insurance of agricultural production from hail catastrophes,"¹¹³ which provided for the creation of a special fund to protect peasants from natural catastrophes, on account of the proposed mode of operation: the fund was to be created by adding a five percent supplementary tax on the land tax already paid by the peasants. While agreeing to the necessity of state intervention, Gabrovski argued that the tax be borne proportionately by the whole population and not solely by the peasantry. It was a matter of fairness, since the peasants constituted the largest part of the constituency and paid taxes that benefited the whole people. He attacked the government for imposing indirect taxes (*aktsiz*) on everyday staple goods,¹¹⁴ hurting essentially only the poor population, and for imposing a land tax on the basis of ownership while disregarding the quality and the actual output of the taxed land. He suggested its replacement with a land income tax.¹¹⁵ Gabrovski's interventions were mostly attuned to the claims of his agrarian constituency, an indication that he was well acquainted with the problems of the countryside. His interventions stand out for their pragmatism and for being driven by a desire for direct and immediate intervention in the socio-political process. It was precisely this attitude that was to facilitate his rapprochement with the broad dissent when the debate erupted in 1900.

The Bulgarian Social Democrats could afford to ignore the agrarian question as long as the countryside remained peaceful. The tide was to change, however, in 1899. Indeed, it was an unwise decision of the Radoslavov government to reintroduce the tithe in a year of bad harvest that set in motion the mobilization of the peasantry, resulted in the first agrarian congress, in Pleven (1899), and witnessed the official creation of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU). In the late 1890s, the Bulgarian government tried to repair growing budget deficits by restructuring the taxation system. Land tax was to be replaced by a harvest tithe in kind, and was finally introduced at the

moment when grain prices were increasing. The reintroduction of the tithe represented only the tip of the iceberg. A series of bad harvests (1897–1899), the international agrarian crisis, felt strongly at the end of the nineteenth century, the preliminary work done by the rural intelligentsia and widespread feeling of political non-representation all contributed to the radicalization of the peasantry. The intransigence of the government, which pushed through the tithe, and the resilience of the peasantry culminated in mass confrontations in the spring and summer of 1900, which made clear to the Bulgarian political world that the peasantry had to be seriously reckoned with. Similar were the estimates of several Social Democrats who recognized in the peasant mobilization an authentic grass-root movement and had to acknowledge the deep anger felt in the countryside. Gabrovski estimated that the agrarian movement had strong local motives, was not going to be ephemeral, and had thus to be taken seriously.¹¹⁶ Blagoev confirms the impact of the rise of the agrarian movement on the Socialists: “The peasant movement not only influenced the majority of the Socialists, *but was the principal cause for the broadening of socialism to the point, that the theory of “common cause” was born and led to a big crisis in the socialist movement.*”¹¹⁷

It has to be underlined at this point that the delimitation lines between socialism and early agrarianism in Bulgaria at the turn of the century were more fluid than it has commonly been assumed. Not so dissimilar to the case of Serbia in the 1890s, where the borders between Radicals, Independent Radicals and early Social Democrats were rather transgressive, as exemplified by personalities like Jovan Skerlić and Kosta Jovanović, the connections between the early agrarians and the Socialists in Bulgaria go much beyond a simple ideological cross-fertilization. Both movements were initially indebted ideologically to populism.¹¹⁸ The early agrarian movement was not only inspired by, but constituted itself partially in theoretical opposition to, the extreme consequences of the Marxist developmental scenario. Dimitŭr Dragiev claimed at the constituent congress of the Agrarians in Pleven: “You, gentlemen, representatives of the blood-sucking parties, and you, Socialists, who deny the right to private property: you have come as uninvited guests to take over the organization whose representatives have gathered here to judge their own situation and their own great destiny.”¹¹⁹ The initial programs of the BANU were heavily inspired by

equivalent social-democratic ones,¹²⁰ while both groups recruited their intellectuals from the same social and professional group: the teacher corpus. The majority of the agrarian leaders were teachers (Pekarev, Dragiev, Zabunov, Tserkovski and, last but not least, Stamboliiski), having received specialized education in agricultural academies in Bulgaria and/or abroad. Not accidentally, the BANU was inspired by the creation of the teachers' association, in whose foundation the Socialists had been instrumental. Most of the early Agrarians had gone through some kind of socialist "training," a form of initiation in critical thought, which sharpened their perception with respect to social problems. The "fluid" confines between early agrarianism and socialism are best exemplified in the face of borderline figures like Tserkovski. Initiated in socialism in the district of Tŭrnovo, where he worked as a teacher, he soon felt frustrated by the long "interval" required until the full and final prevailing of capitalism. This dilemma motivated him to look for an "alternative path," which eventually grew into the idea of the Agrarian Union:

It was as if scientific socialism had exhausted everything ... and there was no other conception of social change possible, apart from the one advocated by Marx. I did not wish to fight against it, even more so, because I absolutely accepted materialistic teachings and could not see any other correct explanation of a phenomenon—even the smallest one—outside of these [teachings]. The issue was what to do with this temporal interval, in which backward countries could slowly evolve from a rudimentary agriculture to an industrial one, and then develop in dependence from factory industry. This path of evolution of our primitive life seemed very long to me, and to feel close to the Western proletariat only through books, while closing my eyes to my surroundings ... This ... I could not do.¹²¹

Tserkovski's double membership, both of the Agrarian Union and the Social Democratic Party, was the principal reason for his expulsion from the BWSDP in 1901. As claimed by Joseph Rothschild, the fact "that in a country with hardly a proletariat, and where 80 percent of the population was peasants, that an avowedly proletarian party should have been formed before an agrarian one, is another indicator of the over-intellectualization ... of Bulgarian party politics."¹²² The Social Democrats self-fashioning as a manifestly proletarian, urban party and their half-hearted commitment to the peasant's cause failed to con-

vince the peasantry. However, if the Bulgarian Social Democrats closed the front door to populism, it entered the political realm through the backdoor in the form of agrarianism. Born at the turn of the century as a protest movement against the government's discriminatory rural policy, Bulgarian agrarianism developed gradually and did not crystallize ideologically until the first decade of the twentieth century, when the BANU found, in the person of Aleksander Stamboliiski, a charismatic figure and an articulate mouthpiece that wove together intelligibly diverse ideological elements, from materialism and evolutionism to revisionism and agrarianism, providing thus the movement with a coherent and essentially modernist ideological outlook. Agrarianism was a specific and certainly an original answer to the problems of modernization in Bulgaria. By accepting the principle of increasing social differentiation and complexity—not, however, in the form of classes, but in the form of professional estates—the Agrarians managed to escape the ambiguities of Serbian radicalism, by *de facto* accepting the consequences of social evolution. If the Serbian Radicals thought primarily in terms of leaping over the exigencies of capitalism, the Bulgarian Agrarians thought rather in terms of controlling them. Both ideologies, however, were based on an anti-individualistic societal vision, founded on a corporatist understanding of social organization. While the Serbian Radicals viewed society as a corporate whole, a circumstance that facilitated also their embracing of the nation, the Bulgarian Agrarians viewed society as consisting of corporate groups or estates. Stamboliiski defined an "estate," as a group of people with the same occupation and with common economic interests, and identified six basic estates in Bulgaria: the agrarian, artisan, wage-laborer, entrepreneurial, commercial and bureaucratic.¹²³ He believed that the conditions of modern life demanded the supplanting of the "retrogressive" form of representation as expressed in traditional political parties, through corporative, statist organizations that would group together the major occupational formations of the country in a system of functional representation. Since economic differences constituted the major problem in development, they should become an issue of open political debate. For this purpose, "an economic government in which all the country's major occupational groups would be represented according to their size would make it possible to confront the problems of economic development openly, and to channel the resources of the country into a consistent program

of economic development, one that would distribute the benefits and burdens more fairly.”¹²⁴ Estatist organizations would eventually cross national boundaries developing into international organizations. Stamboliiski, in contrast to the Socialists, did not espouse a vision whereby large scale mechanized agriculture would replace peasant farming. On the contrary, a variety of means, like the growth of the cooperative movement, would permit the mechanization of agriculture without sacrificing the individual nature of peasant farming. It was the duty of the government to help the peasant overcome his backwardness by diverting the state’s resources from an expensive and excessive civil and military bureaucracy into programs promoting education, communications and other fields indispensable for economic development. Economic growth, for Stamboliiski, was not posed as a dilemma between rural welfare and industrialization, but rather as a choice between an aggressive foreign policy and its concomitant militarism, on the one hand, and rational economic growth, on the other. The peasantry was altogether not against industrialization, but rather a form of industrialization brought about through the decline of rural living standards. The fundamental aspirations of the agrarian estate were to bring about a reallocation of the country’s resources, by shifting the emphasis from militarism to economic growth.¹²⁵ In that sense the BANU was not just another political party, but an “educational-economic organization” engaged in politics with the aim of bringing about a new form of society. In accord with the Socialists, Stamboliiski saw the evolution of society in terms of a struggle for interests, but he considered the antagonism between professional groups more important than class struggle. Whereas the Marxists viewed society in terms of an increasing polarization between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he viewed the future in terms of greater social complexity, where multifarious and multiplying estatist organizations would be created in order to represent different occupational groups. With respect to the relationship between the estates, he deemed that the agrarian and proletarian estates, despite their diverging economic interests, shared several meeting points which allowed for the possibility of cooperation between them, particularly on political issues, such as the maintenance of peace, the reduction of excessive military expenses, and the restraining of Crown prerogatives.¹²⁶

While both the Serbian Radicals and the Bulgarian Agrarians targeted the same social subject, the peasantry, they both were charac-

terized by explicitly distinct political formations. The Serbian Radicals managed to choke and frustrate the creation of an authentic peasant party—the group of peasant tribunes around Adam Bogosavljević—only to present themselves as the mouthpiece of the peasantry. The Radicals were no peasant party of course, but a populist peasantist party, a populist party with pretensions to speak in the name of the peasants. The BANU was naturally also the creation of intellectuals, but in contrast to the Radicals, it consisted of intellectuals that had an immediate and genuine professional relationship with the agrarian milieu. The Agrarian Union was not the work of one man or group, but came about rather as “a coalescence of local movements inspired by men who shared no common ideology, program or purpose save the belief that ‘organization’ would benefit the peasantry.”¹²⁷ Moreover, the BANU had grown out of a genuinely grass roots movement. Whereas the Radicals instrumentalized the peasantry in their ascendance to power, the Bulgarian Agrarians were authentically committed to the welfare of the peasant and advanced a detailed program of predominantly economic reforms concerning evenhanded taxation, credit regulation, vocational training, the implementation of modern techniques in agriculture, the fostering of agricultural cooperatives and the extension of the internal market. The ideological profile of the two parties was also expressly distinct. Whereas the Radicals constructed their ideological profile by codifying peasant patriarchalism and by manipulating the egalitarian rural values of the peasant, agrarianism in Bulgaria was to develop an expressly modernist leftist profile. Mature agrarianism as concocted by Stamboliiski was a conglomerate of various thinkers including Eduard Bernstein, Darwin, Louis Henry Morgan, Eduard David, Othmar Spann, Adam Heinrich Müller, Ernest Renan and Theodor Mommsen. Both movements relied on the merits of well-built and strictly organized party organizations and demonstrated an inclination to practicality. Both capitalized on the tension between the city and the countryside, promoting a more equitable distribution of wealth and burdens between rural and urban areas, and a demand to upgrade the political representation of the countryside. In both cases it represented a kind of “moral revolt” in defense of traditional rural values against the “amorality” of the city and the urban political elites. Despite their distinct ideological profiles, both movements constructed the peasant mentality as the core of their symbolic and ideological uni-

verse. It involved, in the first place, a particular kind of reasoning about things wherein its priorities were based upon the viewpoint of the ordinary and simple producer. It comprised of a hierarchical ordering of values on what was really useful or necessary, practical or just, and, above all, on what was amoral, excessive and superfluous. It was also a reaction against the intellectualization of political life, and the excessive concentration of competencies in the hands of what was generally perceived to be an alienating, disproportionately centralized and unfair state. As distinct as their constituent philosophies might have been, both radicalism and agrarianism shared an anti-capitalistic core credo and envisioned the retention of the small agrarian producer. More than symptomatic was their congruence in the field of political practice. Once in power, BANU was to effectively abandon its initial idea of a popular state based on the free cooperative organization of agriculture, enforcing cooperativism from above and, just as the Serbian Radicals, would conquer the state with the intention of using it as a tool in order to effect socio-economic change in the desired direction. Also in this case, the state was turned into an executing instrument of political Jacobinism.¹²⁸ The end result in the case of the Bulgarian Agrarians was forced etatism and increased authoritarianism, as reflected in their attempts to exercise absolute control over parliament as well as in the increased coalescence of party and state structures.¹²⁹

After the creation of the BANU in 1899, the Social Democrats were compelled to discuss the relationship of the party towards the incipient peasant movement at its 7th party congress, in 1900. Janko Sakūzov was charged with the task of providing a formal report of his impressions of the inaugural congress of the Agrarians. Under the influence of Kautsky, Sakūzov claimed that neither the big peasants nor the rural proletariat were to be won for the socialist cause. Therefore the party's efforts should concentrate on the petty rural bourgeoisie, which was revolutionary since it suffered most from the encroachment of the state and the government. Kirkov was completely dismissive of the peasant movement. He concluded that the agrarian movement was not revolutionary and certainly not progressive in the socialist sense. It expressed solemnly the dissatisfaction of small peasants, struggling to secure their livelihood within the existing social conditions. It was composed of variegated and indefinite "muddy slop" of elements. Of the three categories (big landowners, petty peasants and agricultural

proletariat) represented, only the big landowners represented a progressive element in economic terms, while the petty peasants were progressively facing ruin. Gabrovski, on the other hand, considered the peasant movement to be revolutionary, suggested a broadening of action and the creation of a special organ dealing exclusively with the peasant movement. Leaning partially also on Kautsky,¹³⁰ Gabrovski argued that the peasant question in the West and the East was principally different. In the West, the state had variegated means of income and did not rely exclusively on the contribution of the peasantry, while potentially the peasantry even profited from the state. Altogether different was the situation in the East, where the peasant population was the main source of state extracted revenue. Gabrovski reached a different conclusion than Kautsky. The peasant mass was revolutionary. It would be criminal to remain indifferent towards a movement that was negatively predisposed towards the existing state.¹³¹ The party decision was however dismissive. The peasant movement was characterized by undefined tendencies and was not revolutionary, so party members were advised to exercise extreme caution in dealing with it. Sakūzov sided with the majority, provoking the disappointment of Gabrovski.

It should be emphasized that not all intellectuals who sided with the broad dissent shared Gabrovski's agrarian proclivities, who himself probably felt justified in the warnings he had expressed from the mid-1890s onwards. Sakūzov was no agrarian and, as will be seen later, considered other strata besides the working-class as auxiliaries for the socialist project. But he had to acknowledge the dynamic of the peasant movement and, especially considering the weakness of the working class, probably accepted its numerical superiority. Sakūzov's preoccupations were more of a strategic nature: a desire to keep the peasant movement within the socialist embrace and to make use of its democratic mass potential as a bulwark against the deterioration of the political system. Strategic deliberations were not altogether negligible. "Think narrow, act broad," Gabrovski's tactical formula¹³² for which the Broads would be later accused of political opportunism, was, after all, not so unrealistic. Moreover, Sakūzov's preoccupation with the political system was not based solely on his personal and autonomous inductive reasoning. The issue of self-government and the democratic deficit had received renewed public attention and formed part of a broader political debate in the 1890s as the political system seemed to

progressively succumb to the growing autocratic appetites of King Ferdinand.¹³³ Renewed governmental repression, the radicalization of the peasantry, a ten-year long political experience with grand discrepancies between theory and practice, and the revisionist debate in the West, induced Sakūzov to the publication of *Obshto Delo* [Common Cause], which was to become the heart of the scandal and the last act of the play that led to the 1903 schism.

10. *Obshto Delo*

Before setting up *Obshto Delo* as an independent platform, Sakūzov had officially requested the publication of a biweekly supplement to *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* in order to discuss theoretical issues. His request was turned down. While the debate, triggered by the appearance of *Obshto Delo*, focused initially on the clearly technical issue, that is, the legal status of the publication—the 5th Party Congress had prohibited the publication of any independent political journal apart from the officially endorsed party organs—, it was soon transformed into a debate of substance. The polemic lasted three years—from 1900 to 1903—and its protracted character forced the party intellectuals not only to take sides, but to define with greater precision their visions of what social democracy stood for. Although *Obshto Delo* started appearing in September 1900 as a “magazine on literary and social life,” its contents were programmatically political. It covered a variety of issues from the peasants’ movement to the women’s question, from political theory to book reviews, as well as topics of political, social and legal interest, but its core consisted of the first-page editorials written in a serial, consecutive manner by J. Sakūzov. In these accumulative articles, he advanced one coherent argument that had the form of a political commentary on current events, scrutinizing the social and political problems of the country and proposing a plan of action to be followed.

At its heart the Sakūzov critique consisted of exposing the democratic deficit of the Bulgarian political system, emphasizing the necessity to solidify constitutional rule and the reestablishment of the popular political practice of self-government. In his introductory article, “Polozhenieto” (The situation),¹³⁴ he underlined the violation of the constitutional principles of “freedom and legality” as the political system in Bulgaria was sliding progressively into a condition of “force and lawlessness.” The rights of the Bulgarian people had become a game in the hands of rotating regimes, and the fruits of their labor benefited only the governing elite. Whereas civic freedoms and rights were guaranteed on paper, no authority could safeguard their fulfillment, as the state

mechanism (police, army, etc.) was at the service of the ruling elite and was utilized against the population. It was imperative to find and mobilize the social forces that could bring about social change in Bulgaria.

These social forces existed; they lacked organization, however. In the first place, there was the young movement of the peasants, “born only recently from the simple peasant masses, who are becoming conscious of their discriminated position and subordination in political and economic terms.” They formed a potential social force, demanding “modesty and frugality in our social institutions, equal distribution of the costs of the state, the democratization of the army and education, the enforced responsibility of the civil servants, etc.” Second came the artisans and craftsmen, who had an equal interest in removing a rapacious regime, indifferent to the interests of the productive strata. Efforts in a similar direction came from the commercial and industrial environment as well. They also had an interest in a more financially balanced state, a greater equilibrium between revenues and expenses, the regulation of credit, etc. Last, but not least, was the ascending workers’ movement, gathering its adherents from the ruined craftsmen, the peasants, petty merchants, joined by a non-negligible number of intellectuals, petty civil servants, teachers and the youth. These social forces of physical and intellectual labor necessitated a prosperous country, where the free working population would dispose of its own labor freely. Sakūzov concluded with what became known as his thesis of the “collaboration of the productive strata”:

Who can deny that by organizing and coordinating their separate efforts they could form a broad class, inspired by civic ideas, whose first concern would be to put an end to the personal regime and direct the state towards a productive-capitalistic, rather than a looting-rapacious policy? ... Is there something today or in the nearest future that could stop them—after they have gained greater consciousness and enlightenment—from putting their efforts, in the beginning each one separately, and in the given occasion jointly, in order to lay the foundations for a real civic life? ... Hence, what can we counterpoise to the ruling Force and Lawlessness? *Today* the separate vital interests of the productive strata and *tomorrow* their joined efforts in order for the people to proclaim a long-lasting situation of Freedom and Legality.

Having identified the social actors capable of affecting social and political renovation, Sakūzov focused his attention on “The economic situ-

ation.”¹³⁵ The indispensable precondition for a real representation of the interests of the “productive strata” was the consolidation of constitutional rule. Despite the fact that these diverse interests carried their class-specific character, contradicting or even excluding each other at times, they temporarily agreed on the imperative to establish a strictly constitutional regime, which could safeguard reasonable social development. Its establishment was the task and common state duty of the productive strata in Bulgaria.

For the different social strata to achieve an actual representation of their separate class interests, they had first to ameliorate the detrimental economic relationship between the rulers and the ruled. In despotic or constitutionally immature countries (like Bulgaria), the arbitrary domination of a ruler or an oligarchy over the whole country resulted in personal or courtier regimes. The police and the military turned into instruments of popular subjugation, and the bureaucracy into the executive arm of power. The economic consequence of such regimes was the plundering of the labor of the productive classes for the benefit of the non-productive ones. Whenever a political coterie shared power with the king, as in ostensibly constitutional regimes, arbitrariness multiplied since every single member of the ruling coterie became a small and non-accountable despot. Only temporarily in command, they tried to extract the greatest profit possible, only to be replaced by the next coterie in power in a cyclical pattern with detrimental economic consequences: the draining of state resources, the involvement of the state in non-productive enterprises, the exhaustion and demoralization of the laboring strata, who burdened with heavy taxes, and the lack of alternatives and perspectives. In order to strengthen their own existence and revive productivity, the productive strata had to do away with the personal and coterie regimes, and establish a healthy economic policy.

Sakūzov took his search for social allies even further. Amalgamating class analysis and populism, he answered the question “To whom should we turn?”¹³⁶ by appealing to the people. Sakūzov observed that ever since the country’s liberation, Bulgaria had been experiencing growth, *without however any kind of serious structural change in its social composition*.¹³⁷ Only broad constitutionalism and civic freedom could guarantee and effectuate substantial economic development as well as a scientifically planned and economically fair financial policy. Never and nowhere had kings and coteries abandoned power willingly.

Pressure for the achievement of the above could only come from below through the mobilization of the population, the real and actual source of power:

It is not wonderful and heated appeals that forces kings, cliques and parties to change and become more sensitive to popular needs, but clear, forceful, consistent and direct expressions of the people themselves: of the conscious strata and the productive classes with common-national interests. Every change, every reform is good and useful only when it comes from below, from the interested strata themselves. The big national tasks I have been talking about are of varying degrees of interest to those strata, for the *whole people*, and consequently only from them we can expect the pressure, which will gradually or abruptly change the behavior of the ruling minorities and along with them the workings of the state. *All power comes from the people; all power is rooted in the people ...* To whom should we turn for the realization of the big national tasks? We can give no other answer but *to the people, to the people, to the people!* (emphasis mine)

Sakūzov's populist streak was not a vulgar rhetorical device. Rather, it stemmed from his analysis of the social dynamics in Bulgarian society. Sakūzov diagnosed not only a lack of consolidated classes, resulting in a quasi-amorphous social landscape with no clear demarcations. Even more significant was the absence of a forceful, *leading social strata*, precisely the indispensable social forces who would be capable of heading the project of social and political rejuvenation. In "The calamities of the revival,"¹³⁸ he emphasized the consequences emanating from the specific social formation of Bulgarian society. The basic problem in Bulgaria went beyond the bad quality of its rulers and the incompetence of its parties, traits common to other countries as well. Rather, it was the combination of the abovementioned facts, coupled with specific historical and economic conditions that undermined the foundations of the productive forces and obstructed their leading role in society. The need to turn to the people and appeal to the broader productive forces was motivated by the unfortunate absence of the one stratum, historically charged with the task to be the genuine carrier of reform and economic development, the bourgeoisie. The commercial/industrial strata, due to the particular historical circumstances in which they had to develop, were granted a feeble and humiliating existence. The bourgeoisie was not the racing horse of modernization, nor was Bulgaria ruled by the most developed productive strata, but by a handful of

alternating courtiers. They received the spoils of power, the lion's share of the state revenues, which were geared towards the maintenance of the military, the civil service and the clergy, rather than the augmentation of productivity. Although formally in control, the commercial-industrial class was dilapidated, dependent, and incapable of leading the country on its own initiative. The rest of the productive classes and strata bore equally the mark of a backward and belatedly developed country. In political terms they stood far behind the commercial-industrial class. Their specific interests, however, did not compel them to participate actively in the general life of the country. Only the guilds and handcrafts developed a limited social activity, while the peasants had only recently started to act as a collectivity, yet with still undefined goals. The workers' stratum, although having experienced growth over the past years, was still too weak. Its participation in production was coincidental, inconsistent and changeable. Only a small, insignificant part had become conscious of its social function, while the majority was still lost amidst the other classes and strata.

Sakūzov concluded that the absence of a bourgeoisie, which could assume the realization of the big national tasks and lay the foundation for a progressive movement capable of opposing the destructive tendencies of the hegemonic political groups, had a demoralizing effect upon the population, even upon the intelligentsia. While the leaders of certain social strata were accommodating themselves progressively with the idea that their interests could be satisfied independently by the state, this fact contained several dangers: it had a corrupting effect upon the social strata and the main governing circles and could potentially lead to the strengthening of reaction. Precisely this danger provided good reason for cooperation among the dissatisfied social strata and parties. The Bulgarian people could always oppose the extreme plans of reaction through the united forces of the progressive elements of all social classes. Cooperation was thus conditioned by the concrete Bulgarian circumstances. Human societies, due to their specific historical development, produced diverse driving forces of social evolution. Thus, the potential, which in one society was concentrated in a given moment in one class was divided along several classes or strata in other societies, due to the absence of such a class. The collaborative strength of the conglomerate of worker, peasant, guild/handcrafts and commercial/industrial forces could temporarily play the role of a "replacement"

for this absent social force (the bourgeoisie), whose proper role was to be the regenerator of Bulgarian life.

According to Sakūzov, another problem of political representation in Bulgaria was located in the dissonance between “the people’s needs and the parties.”¹³⁹ The second major political task next to the establishment of constitutional rule was the rehabilitation and extension of popular self-government with the greatest possible participation of the population in public affairs. As soon as it ascended to power, the liberal movement forsook its initial radical principles. Having reached its goal, it retreated from its initial political aims and instead of extending popular rights, it started curtailing them. As a consequence, every political party ascending to power made use of the state machinery, not for the purpose of augmenting the prosperity of the masses, but in order to promote its own clientalistic networks. Parties in Bulgaria did not come to power through popular trust, but through the good will of the Crown. In a certain way, parties were held hostage. On the one hand, they could not resist the aspirations of the court, and on the other, they became a toy in the hands of their own partisans. Such political formations were not controlled neither from above, by royal power, nor from below, by the people. On the contrary, accustomed to living in prosperity on the shoulders of the people, they desired a further cutback of popular rights. The only possible resistance to reaction was the strengthening and broadening of self-government. This movement was hidden in the “womb” of the popular working masses, which had vigorously fought for the establishment of political rights before and could furnish anew the struggle for popular prosperity. The most extreme mouthpiece of this movement in Bulgaria was the Workers’ Social Democratic Party. It wished to cultivate popular political consciousness, so that the enlightened working masses could gradually take over the government, and provide the leadership of the state mechanism on all levels (communal, district, etc.), to the benefit and well-being of every citizen.

Bulgaria was going through a major economic crisis, caused by an expensive government, an unsound fiscal policy, exuberant state expenses exceeding state revenues and the use of foreign loans for non-productive purposes. This policy resulted in the ruin and theft of the population by the state, the incapacity of producers to hold up against foreign competition, while a small portion of citizens were endued with

excessive power and influence. This well-entrenched process produced a special "class" of urban and rural intermediaries, who strove towards greater affluence, while the state and the community bore the cost. Fearful of the loss of their privileged status, they produced corruption and coercion in internal affairs. They represented the political current that wished to wreck the constitutional system by transforming governmental practice into a game of courtier servants. This was the political reaction of the court. "The main tasks"¹⁴⁰ facing Bulgaria were not simply the introduction of some urgent and useful measures, but a thorough change of the currently valid system of state government. A real democracy in power, the simplification of all state functions and the democratization of all social institutions:

If the current system of handling public affairs has produced an expensive, lazy and servile bureaucracy; if it has bred a crude, cruel and greedy militarism, draining the resources of the people; if it has produced treacherous and corrupt-to-the-bone partisans; if, through the favoring of privileged minorities, it has produced the poverty and misery of the masses held in illiteracy; if it has caused the ruin of the professions, and has thrown thousands of working people onto the streets, stripping them of a healthy and joyful way of living; if, in other words, with the help of a complicated state mechanism it has produced a minority of people who live like parasites on the popular masses, stripping them of any means of protection, then the main task of a democracy is, and should be, to return to the popular masses the power that was stolen from them. Only then will the people succeed in creating a cheap, modest and devoted civic and military service. They will manage to regulate the economic and social relationships among themselves in such a way as to allow every working cell in this country, to follow progress, take pleasure in his work, and enjoy the fruits of his labor. In order for the people, the broad masses, to experience a decent human existence, they must have full and unlimited self-government, and in order for it to be strengthened, safeguarded and protected, they must have the power, the organized social force, in their hands.

Having identified the problems of Bulgarian society, Sakūzov touched once more upon the topic of "Bulgarian democracy."¹⁴¹ He defined democracy as the essence of the historical life of the peoples (nations). Societal development was nothing else but the progressive evolution towards the attainment of this goal. He understood democracy as the most immediate form of political participation, condensed in the for-

mula: “upravlението na vsichki za v polza na vsichki” (the participation of all in the government for the benefit of all). Due to the particular and complex socio-economic conditions in Bulgaria, “social democracy”¹⁴² was destined to play a double role. Along with the protection of proletarian interests, it was entrusted with the task of bringing the country to equitable and just social prosperity. Social democracy was thus to be the principal defender of democratic institutions, the “fore-front and most militant force of Bulgarian democracy,” and the only true representative of a reasonable national economic policy. In simple terms, the historical mission of social democracy consisted in turning Bulgaria into a “rich, flourishing and productive place, where the free working population [would] dispose reasonably of its own labor.” Enduring economic conditions had produced a mass of ruined or quasi-ruined craftsmen, peasants and merchants. It was necessary, Sakūzov argued, to promote growth, create the conditions supportive of big production, and attain a high level of economic development. It must have been difficult for Sakūzov, as for Gabrovski before him, to have to acknowledge that capitalism was not automatically doing its job. Without mentioning it strikingly or explicitly, Sakāzov was contesting Blagoev’s automatization thesis.

From 1893/1894, ever since [the party] entered public activity, we have seen it battle *not so much for specific proletarian claims, but for the claims of those strata of the population in the midst of which it had to work and gather supporters*. The alternation in power of one repressive regime after the other, during which political freedoms and popular self-government were always violated, raised [the party] to the most courageous and selfless defender of democracy, and the lack of a social class, which could lead the country towards progress, made the party the only champion and passionate warrior defending this development among the population, both in the press and in the parliament. In this manner, the particular conditions of our socio-economic development also imposed on social democracy, along with the protection of the proletarian interests, the task of being the main defender of our democratic institutions and almost the only representative of a national economic policy, *a policy that is not in the interests of the capital, but in the interests of the working population*. The general tasks [of the party] ... are to penetrate the holistic life of the population, and make it today the only social force capable of corresponding to the general-popular tasks, to be achieved through all-popular participation. In the current economic and social conditions, *social democracy is the only possible democracy in Bulgaria*.

As was to be expected and probably intended as such, Sakūzov's exposition opened a Pandora's box within the party. Long-standing, latent disagreements came to open articulation, revealing a whole array of diverging opinions, not solely related to notions of what social democracy should stand for, but also how to go about the realization of the socialist ideal. Having led the theoretical debate against the populists, Blagoev was called for a second time in his political career to lead the "crusade" against the new "infidels." Perceptions with respect to broader political developments in the Balkans provided additional ground for concern. The spectrum of Serbian radicalism loomed big, not however as a model for imitation, but rather as an example for consternation. Perceptions of the Serbian Radicals as renegades of socialism existed already in the early 1890s in Bulgaria. Characteristically, in 1893 Baka-lov, in the early debate between the Party and the Union, warned of the "dangers" inherent in attracting the "petty bourgeois" masses: "Also in this fashion the party can become strong, but as long as it remains social democratic, it cannot possibly create a serious movement among the petty bourgeois. However, as soon as it starts relying on their support, it will have to go further in capturing their susceptibilities, changing its program into radical in order to satisfy their interests. Precisely herein lies the danger. We saw what happened with the Serbian Socialists. They, like all non-proletarian parties, started leaning on the hand-crafts and turned into radicals."¹⁴³ Skepticism was not the prerogative of the group that later came to form the narrow fraction. Janko Sakūzov in 1899 had expressed similar dilemmas in his correspondence with Kautsky: "The socialists have many followers among the village teachers and the village youth and could, just like in Serbia 15–18 years ago, win the masses over, but then they would cease to be socialists. It is a reactionary petty-bourgeois [among the regressive craftsmen] utopian radicalism advocating justice and economic prudence [*utopischer Gerechtigkeits- und sparsamer Radikalismus*], and any government could break its élan. It is questionable if, in this manner, we could foster a strong movement in Bulgaria."¹⁴⁴ Last but not least, Blagoev expressed not only his concern, but instrumentalized Serbian radicalism in order to defame and delegitimize Sakūzov. He framed Sakūzov's call for a progressive democracy "without a clear class ideal" as an unrealistic project, doomed to failure, and far removed from scientific socialism: "and if the reader wants me to provide facts, I would present as the

more vivid fact the history of the Serbian Radical Party, which is in essence a *democratic party*, of the kind Janko Sakūzov and all our 'true democrats' dream of. This fact is more deserving of study for our 'real democrats,' since it is the result of almost the same socio-political conditions that are prevalent also [in our country]." According to Blagoev, such a "democratic force" was assembled on the ground of a petty-bourgeois ideal and based on a coalition of petty-bourgeois elements, by their nature conservative and even reactionary.¹⁴⁵

Developments in neighboring Romania were equally disquieting. The Romanian Socialists, particularly under the influence of Dobrogeanu-Gherea, had made an original and promising start by including in their 1893 program a minimum agrarian agenda. It was geared towards the small peasants and agricultural laborers and envisioned the procedural purchase of big estates, either through the state or the local communities. It should be remembered at this point that Romania, in contrast to the majority of the Balkan regions, was a zone where big land ownership prevailed, while the institution of serfdom, again a Romanian particularity with respect to the general Balkan norm of a free peasantry, was abolished in 1864, after the Russian example of 1861.¹⁴⁶ The Romanian Socialists, faced with a pressing agrarian issue, strongly supported the elaboration of an agrarian policy by the Second International. They were, however, to abandon their pro-agrarian attitudes conceding to the general apprehension towards the agrarian question, dominant in international social democracy, and particularly in the SPD.¹⁴⁷ It was principally out of frustration and because of the lack of responsiveness of the urban working force that the Romanian Socialists were to redirect their interest towards the countryside in 1898/1899. The founding of a "peasant party" in Wallachia and its short-lived success (1892–1895) provided an additional motivation. The goal of the Socialists' agrarian agitation in the spring of 1898 was to win auxiliary supporters for the upcoming communal elections in the autumn of the same year. Particularly in south-western Wallachia the organization of the peasantry proceeded quickly as manifested in a mushrooming of peasant clubs. Although the Socialists emphasized education, legality and the desire to "raise the standard of the workers," their agitation held a strong appeal for the small peasants, the agrarian element most prone to revolt. It was soon to be proven that the socialist–peasant coalition was based on a major misunderstanding. The peasants equated

socialism with land distribution, and programmatic points like general suffrage were translated into “minimum ownership for everybody.” The Romanian Socialists were on the way to provoking, albeit unwillingly, a peasant revolt. The 1898/1899 agrarian experiment not only ended in a disaster, as it provided the authorities with an excellent pretext for intensified police reaction, but brought about disarray in the ranks of the party itself. In 1900, under the influence of the neo-populist Constantin Stere,¹⁴⁸ a section of the party’s intelligentsia was to cross over to the ranks of the Liberal Party, in an act that became known as the “treason of the generous.” The Social Democratic Party of Romania was dissolved, only to be refounded ten years later.¹⁴⁹ The Serbian and Romanian examples had an infallible echo on the Bulgarian Socialists. Bakalov, arguing against the Broads, warned:

Before we become strong as a proletarian movement, we have to transform into the “people.” We lose our character, our personality and degenerate, following the example of our neighbors beyond Timok and the Danube. Ask our contemporary Serbian and Romanian colleagues how pleasant it is to clean up the piled manure of their “broad” predecessors, to gather their “broad” degenerated mess, in order to detach themselves from the petty bourgeoisie—the dirtied “socialism”—, and start again from scratch.¹⁵⁰

It is thanks to a historiographical distortion aiming to bring Blagoev and the Narrows into tune with Leninism that he has gone down in history as a revolutionary Marxist. The rapprochement of the Narrows with the radical left of the Second International is of a much later date, and does not correspond to the views of Blagoev at the turn of the century. Far from being a revolutionary Marxist, Blagoev was a full-fledged evolutionist, a true disciple of the master Plekhanov.¹⁵¹ It was from Plekhanov that he borrowed the principle theme of his socialism, that is, the inevitability of historical evolution towards socialism, or the development of socialism via the logic of an absolute necessity. It is significant at this point to stress the centrality of ontological “necessity” in Plekhanov’s model of Marxism. Completing his individual passage from populism to Marxism, it should be remembered here that Plekhanov was a central figure in *Chernyi Peredel*, Plekhanov was aware of the dilemma he was faced with when arguing for the capitalistic development of Russia. How could a Socialist ever justify and scrupulously

endorse the suffering involved in the development of capitalism? For this reason, Plekhanov passionately rejected the “subjectivism” of the Populists, and consciously emphasized the inevitability of necessity. His Marxism was characterized by two labile tendencies. On the one hand, he argued that capitalism along the Western European lines was the most “desirable alternative,” and on the other, he rejected any kind of contingency, arguing that his program was elaborated according to the “objective laws of development” and based on “mathematical exactness.”¹⁵² Objectivism did not allow for reflection in terms of “what should be,” and this was indeed a major shift from “what is desirable to what is inevitable.” Wishing to overcome the objections of revolutionary socialists, Plekhanov had to claim “that his choice was the only scientific one and that, strictly speaking, he was merely following the path mapped out by history itself, one that no amount of ‘subjective’ protest could change. In view of his conviction that capitalism necessarily involved the suffering of the masses, he had to put a strong emphasis on the inevitability of the process.” Things were developing not at will, but by rational necessity. As claimed by Walicki, Plekhanov’s “necessitarianism” cannot be explained adequately by the “prevailing spirit of scientific determinism and positivistic evolutionism characteristic of his age. The ‘necessity’ to which he appealed could not be a simple matter of objective facts—adjusting one’s self to mere facts would be sheer opportunism. Therefore it had to be conceived as an ontological necessity inherent in the structure of the universe. We may say that Plekhanov needed a theodicy, and found it in the Hegelian idea of a necessary and rational unfolding of history.”¹⁵³ Whether Blagoev simply took the master at his word, or whether his own reasoning was motivated by a similar psychological “necessity,” is not clear. He probably did both.

Blagoev’s reaction to Sakūzov’s challenge was immediate and fierce. The first point of rupture was Sakūzov’s contention of the necessity to counterpoise a strong popular democratic block against the abuses of the personal regime. Blagoev argued that political forms were the result of a certain momentary constellation of the productive forces, reflexes of the economic structure. The form of economic organization predominant in a country determined also the form of its political regime. Any intervention on the pure political level was redundant; forthcoming changes in the economic basis would take care of the political issue too.¹⁵⁴ The transitional period Bulgaria was going through

and the slow process of social differentiation produced a certain kind of psychology, which was confused, oscillating, and non-durable in its motives. In countries characterized by such a transitional socio-economic situation, absolutism represented the norm, and constitutional rule was nothing more than fiction. If not normal, the breach of constitutionalism was at least logical, for in the end the effect depended on the middle classes: whether they considered constitutional rule more suitable for their hegemonic plans or deemed absolutism a better choice.¹⁵⁵ Generally, Blagoev totalized the economic evolution of society, waiting for the "automatic action" of social laws, and would not tolerate any program or amendment that impeded "natural evolution." Parties were representative of classes and, thus, it was of major importance to distinguish clearly between progressive and regressive parties and forces. Progressive parties sought the promotion of the capitalistic mode of production; regressive ones to retain declining, "antiquated" forms of economic organization. Thus, Karavelov's Democrats, who supported the preservation of the petty mode of production and the control of the exigencies of capitalism, were conservative, even reactionary, while the Progressive-Liberals, who were bringing the country closer to contemporary bourgeois forms, were progressive.

Altogether, the purpose of the bourgeois parties was not to assure freedoms and rights through reforms, nor to try to alleviate the social conditions of the population: their main task was to assure industrial growth, thereby raising Bulgaria to a higher cultural level. Freedom and constitutional rule were nothing more than catchwords, and bourgeois parties should once and for all get rid of the illusion that they were called upon by the circumstances to found democracy in Bulgaria. Appeals to democracy were a bourgeois obstruction strategy. In Blagoev's extremely simplistic political philosophy, democracy was to be achieved only under the rule of social democracy. The rest was a bourgeois fairy tale.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Sakūzov was attributing a positive role to the peasantry and the guilds, throwing theory overboard. The only possibly progressive and revolutionary classes in Bulgaria were the big bourgeoisie and the working class. All the rest in-between were petty bourgeois, and consequently, reactionary. Their main interest was the preservation of lower forms of social relationships, a circumstance that explained also the rebellious mood of the "dark mass." Their desire for the preservation of the petty-bourgeois mode of production meant literally turning

the “wheel of history” backwards.¹⁵⁷ Marxism was the theory of class struggle. The “common cause” formula was nothing but a fiction since different social strata could never have similar interests. The augmentation of production could only be achieved through greater labor differentiation, which inevitably meant the destruction of the independent producers. In fact, the development of production was not in the interest of all productive strata. The middle classes in Bulgaria were deteriorating and were thus incapable of active political participation. They were fearful, conservative and reactionary and formed the constituency of the liberal and democratic parties. Moreover, a great part of the middle classes had one foot in the proletariat, but had not yet abandoned its petty-bourgeois mentality.¹⁵⁸ Sakūzov’s discourse had nothing to do with Marxism. Not only was he distancing himself from the true principles of social democracy, but was in essence preaching nothing else but petty-bourgeois democratism, picking up where the Russian Populists had finished. Divorcing theory from reality, as Sakūzov was proceeding, meant to act “like a ship without a compass.”¹⁵⁹

To a great extent Blagoev’s objections were predictable. More noteworthy are the objections of Bakalov, who reasoned against the Broads, however, from a more practical and also more pragmatic point of view. Bakalov adopted a common starting point with the Broads. Indeed, the working class in Bulgaria was too weak; this was precisely the crux of the matter. It was just starting to organize itself as a separate force, still lost in the midst of other strata, and had only recently started to acquire a separate consciousness:

The collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie is the greatest crime that we can advise our party of in the current situation. The Bulgarian proletariat is far too much of a “collaborator,” and is just now starting to detach itself from petty possessions. Anyone, who one way or the other, deliberately or not, with good or bad intentions, impedes the separation and differentiation of the proletariat as a class, is working against socialism. *Before any kind of collaboration with other “productive forces” comes into question, the working class needs to represent something different from them first. And [the working class] is not there yet. It is still strongly linked to these “strata”—while every strengthening of these relationships delays its socialist consciousness.* Such reconciliatory politics will repel the most conscious and determined proletarian elements from the party. And until now, in fact, we have watched them separate their path from the other “productive” and non-productive strata. In the name of class struggle we awoke them to struggle—and sud-

denly the awoken lion must hide its nails, and blunt the whetstone of class antagonism.¹⁶⁰ ... If the working force were already so imbued with socialism, leaving no more work to do in this respect, then it would appear logical to search for allies among other strata. If the socialist movement were close to taking power, it would also be logical to search for adherents in other adjacent fronts. *But this is not at all the state of affairs in Bulgaria. For the moment being, the issue is simply that socialism is just starting to take roots in the Bulgarian environment. Precisely for this reason, a great economy of forces is needed.*¹⁶¹

There was a genuine fear that the extension of the party's activity beyond the workers' milieu was adulterating the party's character. Attracting the "petty-bourgeois" mass, and adjusting to its protectionist aspirations, could only be successful at the price of diluting the class character of the party. It meant turning *populist*:

In order to have massive success in the countryside, which is what class co-operation presupposes, we have to abandon the character of a *workers'* party and turn into a *popular* party. "Common popular" demands—opposition to taxation and militarism—have to be predominant in our agitation, which will continue to be distinguished as socialist, only due to the personality of its bearers, but not due to the character of the party. This way we will win over the "broad popular mass," not as Socialists, but as Democrats; we will win the mass over, when we repudiate [our role as] Socialists. *In other words, we do not win it over, but it wins us, we do not make it socialist, it reduces us to "friends of the people."*¹⁶² ... This mass is attentive to our voice, simply because it is disappointed. Up to now it did not know to whom to turn. It will follow us only for some of our demands, only to the degree that we adjust ourselves to it. And it is indeed a molding force. It is not only numerous, but its spirit penetrates everything in backward Bulgaria ... The decay and the loss of the party would be the only result of the "broad" flirting with the "productive forces."¹⁶³ ... Strength is gathered from the scattered rabble of diverse elements, and not from the growing organization of the workers. The party is not erected on the basis of the everyday struggle of the proletarian class. The party is not its highest expression, but it maneuvers amidst all "productive strata" and becomes *populist*, that is, *in-between classes* [*mezhduklasova*], and *supra-class* [*vŭnklasova*]. Socialism is not the wreath of proletarian class struggle, but turns into a populist utopia. All "good people" who "care about the people," are the true Socialists, not the "fanatics blinded by the Marxist dogma of class struggle."¹⁶⁴

The most probable outcome of the collaboration with the other "productive strata" would be to reduce the young and immature workers'

party into a “tail” of the bourgeois parties. Compromising its character signified giving the opponent an advantage. Moreover, the Broads’ belittling of theory in favor of practical activity and their insistence on divorcing theory from practice meant that they were in danger of losing the end goal from sight:

As Marxism is the theory, social democracy is the practice. The more a labor party is socialist, the more it is imbued with Marxism. A socialist party without theory—and the most scientific theory has been Marxism up to now—cannot be socialistic. A revolutionary movement without social-revolutionary theory is inconceivable. To imagine a movement on its own, without a leading theory, is to stay voluntarily in the darkness, without making use of hitherto workers’ history.¹⁶⁵ When they scorn, ignore or belittle the theory, our opportunists do not exercise an influence towards the “broad popular mass,” but [on the contrary] the mass influences them. In order to influence it, they get influenced themselves, simply and clearly; they adjust themselves ... *A true socialist influence among non-proletarian strata is absolutely impossible without a strict scientific system or the spell of an unshakably scientifically founded ideal.*¹⁶⁶

11. “Alarm for Ghosts—Our Apostasy or Their Nonsense”¹⁶⁷

After the party split (1903), Sakūzov wrote the “Alarm for ghosts,” elaborating on his positions, especially with respect to the issue of class struggle and class cooperation. A major point of contention between the two camps concerned the evaluation of the political situation in Bulgaria, the causal connections underlying political problems, and the means and tactics to be employed for their alleviation. A principal contention of the Narrows—particularly of Blagoev—consisted in explaining the problems of the political structure (personal regime, party coteries, the erosion of constitutionalism, etc.) as a reflex of the constellation of the productive forces (the formation of the bourgeoisie, capitalistic development, the initial accumulation of capital, etc.), expecting concomitantly that a change in the economic structure would lead automatically to a change of regime. The reflex theory was heavily contested by Sakūzov, who insisted that the problem lay rather in the underdevelopment of the social forces in Bulgarian society. The autocratic interventions of the court were a separate issue and demanded a most immediate and urgent intervention at the political level. He considered it highly problematic to expect—like in a mathematical equation—economic and social evolution to provide solutions for the current problems. Nor could time present be constantly transcended for the sake of a law-abiding apocalyptic time future.

These were the considerations that induced Sakūzov to suggest the alternative of “class cooperation.” It was envisioned as a temporal measure against the Radoslavov regime, and did not have the weight of a thorough theoretical revision. The principal aim was to overthrow an arbitrary regime and re-establish legality and freedom in the country. Two insights conditioned the contents of these specific “tactics.” In the first place, the realization that the BWSDP was too weak a force to alter the situation on its own, and in the second, the experience gained during the struggle against another arbitrary regime: the Stambolov regime. This last case had a “didactic” content. Sakūzov observed that the enforcement of autocratic rule provoked in society a popular, spon-

taneous and democratically inspired resistance movement that went beyond the particular class interests of the actors involved. Despite the fact that they participated for the sake of their own specific interests, as soon as the general struggle started "the specific class interests subsided to a secondary position, according, of course, to who was involved and how much was at stake in this heated struggle. 'Some sort of common interests' came to the front—the quest for the personal freedom of the individual, speech, the press, elections; a generally fair financial policy; the modesty and frugality of institutions; equality in the state services; democracy in the educational and military corpus, enforced responsibility of the civil servants, etc."¹⁶⁸ This was also the experience gained from the regional social movements in Eastern Bulgaria. Here "a mixture of people from different, quite antagonistic classes, with most contradictory aims" came together in resistance. It was not class adherence that dictated their action but something else. They came to the defense of something, in a cause that was common for all.

Sakūzov became progressively more theoretical about class struggle. The personal needs and interests of the individual producer were the starting point for what became the consciousness of a community of a whole group of producers embedded in the same conditions, normally called class interests. However, sometimes due to the frustration or dissatisfaction of their interests, the most receptive part of this group or class leaned—either to the left or right—towards the corresponding part of another group of producers, allying themselves in something that was somehow common to both. In other words, a social group suffering under the control of a hegemonic power-group naturally attracted a number of other people, usually producers, who were equally dissatisfied with power and who were forced to formulate common goals with the other oppressed group. In this fashion a temporarily united social group came into being, with common goals, common intellectual and political representatives, and even common programmatic points. In such situations the abstract principle of class struggle became tangible. Although in peaceful periods, especially in an economically underdeveloped society like that of Bulgaria, this principle was hidden below the surface, barely connecting the groups of producers, it surfaced immediately in periods of political and financial crisis. The reactionary strokes of the ruling group helped unite the mass of producers into one. The more the destructive reactionary oppression was strengthened

and threatened peace, the livelihood and the existence of more groups of producers, the more the hitherto dominant principle of class struggle broadened, embracing neighbors, and even rival groups of producers, into a common struggle for the preservation of a common basis or in order to obtain a common majoritarian ground—be it constitutional, fiscal, etc. While in peaceful times, in an economically developed society, class struggle was anchored to its natural limits, in a backward society it receded—contingent on the personal interests involved—“to a connecting economical, cooperative struggle.” In the condition of an anomalous destructive regime it broadened into a common cause for several classes or even into a common national struggle between an internal destructor and an external conqueror.

Sakūzov considered both class struggle and class cooperation parallel and complementary phenomena in social life. Class cooperation was, in a certain way, the other side of the coin of class struggle, and was a process that took place without any previous proclamation by the cooperating parts. Usually in peaceful times, class struggle was the only discernable social activity, yet at the same time the entire society or some of its bigger or smaller fractions engaged in another activity. This activity was invisible and yet perceptible to the competent politician or social leader. The stronger the class struggle, the more discernable was that other form of common action. In other words, the more economically advanced a society and the sharper the class struggle, equally strong, although silent, was that common activity which usually develops in two directions: a protective/defensive and a conquering/aggressive one. Sakūzov used the case of England to exemplify his thought. Despite strong class antagonism in that country, there existed also values commonly shared and cherished by different classes: things that made them proud to be English like national independence, or specific rights and liberties. When the English acted in the name of these values, they acted simultaneously with the intention of strengthening their own class interests. This common activity of all interested classes emerged and was enhanced inconspicuously, silently, and in all spheres of everyday life activity. All cooperated for the retention of national independence and internal self-management. In this way, the traditions of a nation—patriotic, independent, constitutional, etc.—were created. It is interesting to note here that Sakūzov was arguing predominantly from the standpoint of the welfare of the nation. This circumstance has to be

read in the light of what Sakūzov considered to be the big national tasks in Bulgaria, already explicated in *Obshto Delo* in the form of a triad: the establishment of popular self-government, a true democratic and representative political system and a healthy national economic and financial policy. Here again it was the discrepancy in economic development that forced this kind of intellectual "retreat" from a "universalizing" scenario, giving precedence to the imperative of national growth. This kind of reasoning had informed also the thought of Friedrich List with respect to the economic development of Germany.¹⁶⁹

According to Sakūzov, common movements came about in order to preserve something as a whole or conquer something common for a smaller or bigger part of the population. Such "cooperation" was a fact in the lives of nations (*narodite*). As there was struggle for the preservation of something already achieved or for the acquisition of something new and necessary, equally there was class cooperation in order to preserve conquered freedoms, rights or benefits, and for the acquisition of new, necessary means, rights and benefits. Class struggle, in a way, presupposed class cooperation. Both were facts of life and facts in life. Summing up, he claimed:

[D]espite the specific and contradictory interests that separate social classes or certain categories of it might have, despite the solidity of the principle of class struggle, despite its constant and uninterrupted presence, there are moments or domains in the lives of people when and where, in the process of social struggle, these divided classes or class categories, develop common action in order to preserve or achieve what appear to them as general benefits or goals, which is in fact nothing else but a variation of the struggle for interests.¹⁷⁰ Without having suggested that the workers abandon the socialist flag—class struggle—I had in mind, rather, that the extensive destructiveness of the regime calls to the forth the general interests between certain productive strata, while the realization of this task is taken over by that class, which has the greatest interest in the establishment of a legal civic life. The conclusion? When a society is befallen by a regime like Radoslavov's, its vital forces—in the beginning separately, later with a certain complicity, and then joining forces with others—overthrow the unbearable situation because, usually during this intensive moment, they overcome the borders of their separate interests.¹⁷¹

Sakūzov expressed in a semi-theoretical, semi-empirical, yet class-oriented language, what he understood to be a broad, inclusive movement of popular, unpremeditated resistance with strong democratic

undertones. It was directed against the state and the ruling elite, the growing authoritarian features of the political regime and the corrosion of the political system, inciting a legitimacy crisis whose center of gravity was predominantly political. Sakūzov described—to phrase it in the terminology of Ernesto Laclau—a popular movement that resembled a “people/power block” confrontation. Such confrontational blocks come about as the result of cleavages between the people and the ruling power block and incite an antagonistic relationship, where “the dominated sectors could not identify themselves as a class, but as ‘the other,’ ‘those counterpoised’ to the dominant power block.” Consequently, “populism consists in the presentation of popular-democratic interpellations as a synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology.” This form of populism “starts at the point where popular-democratic elements are presented as an antagonist option against the ideology of the dominant block.”¹⁷² Sakūzov refrained from treating the political as a simple appendix of the economic factor; he did not fall prey to economic reductionism. Precisely this point was to be another major point of rupture between the Broads and the Narrows, as we will be witnessing below.

Sakūzov elaborated further on the position of the working class and its relationship to other classes. He indirectly questioned the a priori notion of a hermetically defined “class,” insisting not only on the penetrability of class borders but also on the notion of class as constantly “in the making.” Modern capitalistic societies were differentiated internally through a blunter or sharper division into several antagonistic classes. The more economically developed a country was, the sharper the separation of the proletarian class from the rest of the working population—peasants, handworkers, other petty producers—and those from the class of the enterprising capitalists. However, no matter how distinct the working class might be through the means by which it secured its existence, in reality it retained multiple and variegated connections to the working population from which it originated in the first place, while it developed new connections to other classes or strata in its immediate surroundings. “That means, that no matter how much we intellectually—through abstractions—might separate the working class from other classes, in reality it stands in a direct [reciprocal] relationship to its surrounding milieu, from which it takes, and to which it gives, different impressions and influences.”¹⁷³

When speaking of the proletarian class in an economically developed country, we mentally conceive only the nucleus of this class, limited and arbitrarily separated at the bottom of the scale from petty producers and at the top from capitalist entrepreneurs. But even in such an abstract manner, the nucleus of the working class, with all its homogeneity in terms of productive relationships, is subject to the most variegated influences from the classes with which it interacts in life generally, and to which it gives equally the most variegated imprint of its own movement. This is the milieu from which the representatives of the proletarian nucleus are assembled and from which the proletarian party, the party of social democracy, is recruited. Elements from other classes and strata enter it too, of course. Nonetheless, all members and followers of the party accept the social strivings and goals of the proletarian nucleus, so that the workers' party is rightfully considered to be the political representative of the workers' nucleus. Nonetheless, the working class lives and develops in the midst of other neighboring or opposed classes, and interacts with surrounding ones, so that the workers' party moves and acts in the midst of several, some less, some more antagonistic, social and political groups, which it undeniably influences and from which it undeniably receives certain impulses. After all, a party consists of various individuals with socially heterogeneous backgrounds, heterogeneous and different perceptions, minds and sensibilities, coming from different social environments and education, and confronted with various facets of life. Consequently, also the life, the thought and the activity of the party, notwithstanding the general goals and strivings of the worker, and party nucleus will receive the imprint, and will experience the influence of these various understandings, thoughts and activities.¹⁷⁴

In contrast to the "grand social polarization" scenario, Sakūzov viewed society as a complex interdependent organism in motion, where classes, social groups, the mode of production, the distribution of wealth, but also the state, foreign interventions, and elites provided for an intricate arena of social and political interaction. The standing of the party within a complex mechanism like the state, which in turn was connected to other similar mechanisms that reciprocally influenced each other in diverse and sensitive ways, was a complex one. This influence produced certain kinds of relationships among the classes of producers, which in turn altered the initial relationships, originating from the local, internal positioning within the state. The rule of a certain class within the state; its independent or class-collaborative rule; the influence it had on legislation, economics, finances, politics; the administrative patronage of certain classes and their sub-divisions; the temporary coalitions

and transgressions of various socio-political groups; the vacillations and the various changes in the mode of production and the distribution of wealth: all these complicated, altered, at times even dislocated, and changed the relationship of classes and parties, and, as a consequence, determined the behavior and the distinct position of every party. The results of these changes were undoubtedly mirrored predominantly in the workers' class, as the main producer of wealth, while the workers' party was most susceptible to the repercussions caused by those changes. It was clear, that such a party constituted that field within the state where most of these lines crossed, where most influences collided, and where therefore social thought had to concentrate most strenuously.

In Bulgaria the international influence was greater, but the inter-class differences were duller. The capitalist class did not occupy a central position as a dominant element, while the working class, although not the only suppressed group, represented the working stratum most interested in the country's economic and political progress. Sakūzov underscored a paradox in the political function of social democracy in Bulgaria. The Social Democratic Party—as a cultural and political avant-garde—played a comparatively weightier role in the country's political life, not only in relationship to other countries, but also in proportion to existing rudimentary working class. Hence, it was to be concluded that the party had a broader representative function than strictly the working class milieu. Here again, Sakūzov challenged the supposition that the Social Democratic Party had to be viewed in the most strict and absolute terms as a “class party,” and if so, only as the exclusive class party of the proletariat. It was an illusion to credit the volition of individuals or the appearance of a journal for the dislocation of the political function of the Social Democrats. Political developments literally “threw” the party—almost involuntarily—into the arena of mass politics. It was the campaigns against the rule of Stambolov and Radoslavov, and the resistance to the monopoly credit on tobacco in 1901, that made the party appreciate its constituency, translating into parliamentary mandates. While in such turbulent periods the party seemed to rally popular support, in more peaceful and content times preference for the Social Democrats seemed to ebb. Broad or Narrow political activity was, thus, a false dilemma. The circumstances dictated the relevant course of action, charging the Social Democrats with the task of a perspicacious discernment of the appro-

priate situational strategy. To the accusation that he was dislocating the party from its natural proletarian milieu, orienting it progressively towards the petty-bourgeois environment, Sakūzov explained that his intention was to attract the attention of the party towards certain conditions in which party life was developing and which unavoidably had an influence on its activity. *"I wanted to show that it is not a journal or individuals, but something beyond us, escaping our control that displaces the party from its milieu and directs it towards 'foreign', as was stated in the Jambol congress, or 'neighboring', as was formulated in the Pleven congress, environments."*¹⁷⁵ The problem was intricately related to the issue of mass politics. Despite consecutive party decisions stressing the proletarian character of the socialist movement and the necessity to restrict the party to its "natural" milieu:

We tried to draw back the socialist activity from the petty bourgeois mixture surrounding us. We grew and grew in the midst of petty-bourgeois elements and petty civil servants ... This fact, I said, should cause us to question *whether this transgression beyond the workers milieu is only a weakness of our proletarian beliefs, or if it is a necessity dictated by the surrounding conditions, which are stronger than our will. If we do not subordinate ourselves to them, we risk incurring the contempt and the spite of the working masses towards our party.*¹⁷⁶

In an indirect way, Sakūzov suggested that the problems arising in the process of adaptation of socialist theory in Bulgaria were really structural in nature. He advanced a typology of a three-stage maturing process of an individual socialist, which corresponded symmetrically to the growth of a socialist party. The first step, the utopian stage, was characterized by enthusiasm for the noble ideals of socialism and the belief in the voluntaristic materialization of the ideal. The realization that enthusiasm and dedication were insufficient in order to achieve the goal was the prelude to the second step, the economic-organizational stage. This phase was coupled with the realization of the necessity to rely upon these elements in class society, which according to the degree of economic development, rise as the carriers of the socialist ideal. The main task consisted in enlightening them about their suppression, awakening in them the feeling of solidarity, and organizing their economic struggle into a general struggle of the working class against the class of capitalists. The third and final stage was the social-democratic

one. Here the party was in absolute mastery of all political, social and economic means in the struggle against the enemies of the proletariat. In Bulgaria the first stage was to a certain extent put into practice by the “Party” in the period 1892–1893, while in precisely the same years, the “Union” initiated the second phase. Germany, for example, had fully entered the third phase, France and Italy were experiencing the difficulties of the second phase while stepping with one foot into the third. Bulgaria found itself in an oscillating condition, which fed the differences of opinion and the party disputes. In Bulgaria, despite its economic backwardness, or more precisely because of it, the party vacillated in an in-between condition: in one instance entering the third phase and then again retreating from it. Sakūzov implied that the party did not really go through the necessary second phase of economic organization before it somehow leaped ahead into the third. This unorthodox growth really rocked the boat. “I would basically like to underline that there is nothing more superficial than the opinion that individual personalities were responsible for this displacement or that, again, individual efforts will be able to restrain the party in the second untraversed phase of development.”¹⁷⁷

In the “Alarm” Sakūzov returned to the topic that vexed him most, and which constituted a major bone of contention between the two fractions: the relationship between theory and practice. According to him, a theory did not fulfill itself automatically, but had to be tested against the concrete social terrain where it was to be applied and, furthermore, adapted to its specific needs. The big theoreticians, Marx and Engels, created their theories by participating in the revolutionary movements of the 1840s and 1850s. Their revolutionary theories were born out of the concrete experiences of big social movements:

In such stormy times, the socialist leader can easily penetrate the stuff that produces history and, at the same time, verify and estimate the great value of theoretical conceptions like Marx’s. Only by feeling the pulse of life and reality it is possible to get to know the precious essence of a big thought; only in the waves of big social movements can a social theory be tested ... [W]e, the small followers of big teachers, we equally cannot realize the wonderful adaptability of their theories in the thousand intricacies of life if we do not participate with thought and action in its various manifestations. *The theoretical abstractions that we study as the essence of Marxism have—also in our case—to be verified as a consequence of the detailed*

*study of the struggles of life, and not as a mould [kalüp] in which we push the living diversity of social phenomena.*¹⁷⁸

Sakūzov pinpointed the difference between the fruitful application of a method in the study of social reality and the uncritical, formalistic application of already acquired results. He insisted that the principle contribution of Marxism consisted in the elaboration of an instrumentarium of appropriate analytical tools and a scientifically founded methodology for the study of social phenomena, and its rejection of the blind endorsement of ready-made conclusions. A theory had to be verified in reality. What happens when a researcher is confronted with discrepancies between the results of a scientific research and the actual forms of life? It is an imperative of his commitment to the search for the truth that he resolve to a process of inquiry, either into the facts he obtained from research, or his learned formulas. One has to account for why and when some otherwise truthful results of scientific research are fractured and bent by life and why in social movements certain factors in the most variegated force and degree become primary, or secondary. Sakūzov warned against an uncritical, bookish application of theory in the study of social phenomena: "The thinking person has to be conscious that he is dealing with abstractions, isolated from any temporal conditions. A scientific abstraction can never be applied directly to life, because in reality it can never be found as such, isolated and detached."¹⁷⁹ It was erroneous to consider that because "*nobody disputes the validity of the abstract aspirations of the separate categories of a productive stratum that every category of producers take their abstract aspirations, clean and detached, and, like scientific abstractions, discard them in the social arena where, independently of the actions of people, history takes place. What a bookish, laughably pitiful notion about the internal mechanisms of social processes.*"¹⁸⁰ Concluding, and rather paradoxically in a vein reminiscent of Lavrov's call to action, Sakūzov underlined the major tasks of the party, with a feverish appeal for activism:

[The party] has to penetrate into the most remote corners of the workers' milieu, it has to promulgate its goals to the working masses and with its stipulations, get involved in all social struggles in our country ... In action, it assimilates and adapts the theory; in action it acquires organizational, self-managing and managing skills; in action it puts its stamp on

the actuality and directs the development in the desired direction. The acquaintance with theory is necessary in order to show the way and direct the means. Organization and cohesion are necessary in order to strengthen both the defensive and offensive blow. Only through activity among the working class, among the working masses, amidst the social struggles, can the party achieve its goals. For this activity both theory and organization are necessary. *Activity is that which verifies the truthfulness of theory, which tests the strength of organization. For a social party there is no better school than the school of life, for life is activity and activity is life.*¹⁸¹

12. Historical Materialism Not Economic Determinism

In his *Principles and delusions of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party*,¹⁸² P. Dzhidrov discussed the epistemological foundations of Marxism, answering to some of the principle accusations of the Narrows. Dzhidrov identified the low and superficial brochure knowledge prevalent in the party as the basic obstacle in the comprehension of Marxism. Lack of sophistication led to a one-sided understanding of the essence of Marxist teachings. The precondition for the study of any social question was the development of critical thought, which should serve also as a security valve against the jeopardizing influence of brochure knowledge. Many of the party members, having acquired only a shallow socialist education, considered every word, every phrase that they heard for the first time and which could not be found as such in the brochures, as non-socialistic.

Dzhidrov discussed the legacy of Marxism after Marx for ensuing generations of Socialists and disputed the absolute primacy of the economic base. Not even Marx himself considered his assertions as the only existing Marxist truth. On the contrary, he constructed a theory, which, following the evolution of thought and the accumulation of new knowledge, would have to be supplemented—with the help of his method—in order to become viable. Notwithstanding the fact that the economic component remained the principal driving force, which in the final instance determined the character of different historical periods, it was necessary to acknowledge the influence of other factors and forces apart from the productive forces in historical development. The quest to explain every historical moment, the intellectual capacities of people or the abundant coincidences in history as the outcome of historical necessity produced completely unscientific and lifeless results. However, there were proponents of this view, who dismissed coincidences in history, regarding all political events as the outcome of indispensability. Dzhidrov explained his case with the example of the monarchy, obviously alluding to the case of King Ferdinand. It was possible that a monarch was gifted and thus beneficial for his country

or on the contrary, inapt and detrimental. Historical materialism could never explain this coincidence. "Is it necessary to explain any kind of human stupidity perpetrated by a monarch which might have serious consequences and historical significance according to Marxist theory, the struggle of the classes or the exclusive influence of the economic factor?"¹⁸³ The individual personality could exercise an influence on the flow of development as well. Nonetheless, neither the most powerful monarch nor the most profound thinker could determine at will the exact course of development, nor foresee its future form. Accepting the influence of the role of personality in history was neither a negation nor a repudiation of historical materialism. A personality was capable of accelerating or slowing down the course of development. Nevertheless, a careful examination of all instrumental factors would undeniably yield the economic factor the prerogative. At issue was rather the level or the degree of influence. Marx's theory stood solid, even when other historical factors were taken under consideration. Such an understanding of Marx's theory had the advantage of forcing the social leader or thinker to correct his views with regard to concrete reality, to understand holistically the moving forces behind it, and use them for subsequent development.

Dzhidrov delved in the second place on the reciprocity between material conditions and political forms. In a similar manner to Sakūzov, he questioned the absolute causality between the political superstructure and the economical base. Why should a certain regime in Bulgaria be regarded as an absolute, direct and necessary result of the mode of production? How could it be that similar economic conditions produced different kinds of regimes? Why in the period of initial capitalistic development were the political superstructures of the Western European states dissimilar? Political order could take various forms and depended on multiple factors like a people's temperament and intellect, the geographical position of a country, its past history and historical traditions, monarchical compliance, etc. Political structures were not solemnly dependent on economic conditions. The capitalistic mode of production demonstrated similar tendencies in all countries; however, the social forms of the various capitalistic states were very different. He exemplified his assertion through the case study of Germany. In the previous decades, Germany had experienced a most rapid economic development, exceeding in strength the rest of the European states.

Despite this economic transformation, the country's political forms did not change as rapidly, and in this respect, Germany lagged behind other economically weaker states. It was an absurdity to claim that a certain degree of economic development determined one specific political form, and, consequently, that any change of the political superstructure in a society was impossible. It was even more absurd to claim that a temporary regime was unconditionally determined by the economic conditions predominant in a country, and moreover that the development of the productive forces allowed only for one kind of government. According to this logic, every struggle against a corrupt government was senseless and fruitless. To think this way was tantamount to being a fatalist. The essence of Marxism lay not in its eternal infallibility, but rather in the fact that new discoveries and investigations and the whole accomplishments of science made Marx's basic theories viable by enriching them with contemporary human knowledge. For Marx, historical materialism was a theory and a methodology to study actual life, and through which he explained the direction of historical development. Thanks to this method he analyzed the tendencies of capitalistic development in the modern world and understood the laws of historical evolution, whereby the whole of history was revealed to him as a law-abiding process of the development of humanity. Nowhere and never did the master of historical materialism explain every phenomenon of political life exclusively through the economic factor outside of which there were no other driving forces. What he essentially said was that "the development of the productive forces in a society determine[s] the tendency of social development."¹⁸⁴ Marx's major contribution was his system of thought and his investigation method, which he rounded up in a well-built, congruous theoretical system. For this reason, his theories had a great practical significance, and could never be hostile neither towards life nor towards social progress:

To know life means to understand its complexity. Not to regard it as the result of some kind of fatalism, but as a process of development whose basis is indeed ruled by the development of economic forces, but where a variety of other factors exercise an influence as well, which we have to understand, estimate and use ... Life is in every hour, in every moment; to work *in* and *for* it means to understand and respond to the needs of the times. In acting this way, does it mean we lose sight of the tendency of development? That we fail to direct our activity according to a strictly de-

fixed scientific path? That we miss an accurate worldview with respect to historical development? Such a claim can be maintained only by those for whom gradual successes are not important, and who console themselves with an *idea* but do not prepare the basis for its realization. Such a person can only be a useless idealist! A Social Democrat cannot and should not be such. A Social Democrat more than anybody else has to be a vivacious social leader, who dares make use of everything provided by life. For him, every step ahead should be precious, not only for the benefit of the working class—which undoubtedly makes up the greatest part of his work—but for the general development of the country, for the general social development.¹⁸⁵

According to Dzhidrov, theory could never prescribe the exact parameters of action. A generic theory of social evolution could never be applied indiscriminately to any concrete reality. Intellectuals developed theories in order to comprehend the mechanics of social organisms, not for them to be applied unconditionally. Theory helped explain reality, grasp the tendencies of development, and indicate the direction of action in order to acquire more effective results. “But theory does not prescribe when, where and what has to be done; that means it does not predetermine the way of action in a specific moment. This is dependent on the needs of concrete reality in a given time.”¹⁸⁶ Generic theory and the Western social-democratic experience, despite their significance for the party’s development, contained limitations. Bulgarian circumstances necessitated modifications:

We think that Marxian socialism is scientific for it is the only [theory] that illuminates the realization of the socialist ideal. Nobody disputes this in Bulgaria. The difference is this: how to direct our activity in order to prepare the beginning for its realization and which are the immediate tasks dictated by our specific social and economic conditions. In this respect, there has to be dissent in order to gain a clearer picture of our situation. Every new opinion has to be greeted with gratitude, every suggestion with pure calmness, *because our reality is very different from the one through which [general] experience was gained. We have to arrange on our own the thorny path of social life. We will benefit from the socialistic practice in the West, but we cannot copy. And how hard this is! This is an additional reason to be even more careful with every new idea. Look at the West; there Marxist theory is fully illuminated by life. We are convinced that it is correct; we see how correctly it perceives the laws of development, laws which govern the development everywhere, in Bulgaria too. However, the level of development of*

*our country does not allow us to see this picture of society that Marx portrayed with his theory through the observation of modern capitalistic society. This discrepancy does not mean that this picture is not correct, since we see it realized in the life of the developed societies, which is the path that our society is following and will be following. The period we are going through is a transitional period with many particularities in comparison to the condition of the Western European states.*¹⁸⁷

Like Dzhidrov, D. Dimitrov also emphasized that Marxism had to be understood “broadly.” It was significant to point at the most basic views of Marx in their most general form. A Marxist should be considered anyone who popularized and developed them further, made use of Marxist principles in order to analyze previous epochs, or applied them to contemporary social events. It was equally important that these basic views should not suffer through their popularization either in form nor content. It was essential to retain the Marxist spirit in the analysis of social phenomena. This tendency was clearly formal and did not contain any limitations with respect to the contents of the asserted thoughts. The stronger or weaker manifestation of this tendency depended on the concrete reality under study. In any case it remained always a tendency. The uncritical application of Marxist conclusions to Bulgarian reality was producing a series of false evaluations with respect to concrete Bulgarian circumstances. For example, extrapolating from the scenario of *The Communist Manifesto*, whereby the middle classes—petty merchants, small producers, craftsmen and peasants—were classified as reactionary, since they were fighting against the bourgeoisie in order to maintain their status, it was concluded that in Bulgaria, too, the middle strata were useless for any kind of democratic or progressive reforms. A different evaluation however was provided by Kautsky, who maintained that in countries with underdeveloped industry, the peasants developed a feeling of being exploited by the state, and under circumstances constituted a progressive social force, which if not socialistic was at least democratic. Such a potential, under the intellectual guidance of an urban social democratic force, consisting of workers and the best elements of the intelligentsia, could be of great assistance to the country. Equally misleading was the uncritical acceptance of the thesis on the centralization and concentration of industrial development. The moral extracted was that petty production was disintegrating and logically all small owners were potential proletarians. It

was thus unnecessary to undertake any kind of practical intervention. Legislative measures to alleviate the condition of small producers like the creation of associations in order to obtain some of the benefits of big production, the creation of credit institutions in order to procure common materials and protect small producers from the exploitation of big merchants and capitalists, were considered pointless. All that these strata had to do was line up in the party and wait for the establishment of socialism. The list of absurdities grew only longer. Since the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat characterized the history of the nineteenth century, it was concluded that this was the case in Bulgaria as well. Socialists made use of ready-made analytical categories without questioning whether they had a real equivalent in Bulgaria. They rushed to prove which party was the representative of which specific strata and interests, for example, the representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie, of the big peasant bourgeoisie, of the petty bourgeoisie, etc. Party policies were based on *a priori* assumptions and generalizations about the reactionary character of the middle strata, the almighty force of materialist conditions, the impotence of parties in influencing the economic development of the country, their incapacity to have a beneficial or a harmful influence. There existed significant differences between a historian and a politician. A historian preoccupied himself with long spans of time, while a politician with the insignificant short moments of development. The historian explained; the politician made history. It was not in the spirit of historical materialism to explain the indecisive character of a government through material conditions, nor remain inactive when political rights were being curtailed.

13. The Debate on Private Ownership

The already strained relationship between the two fractions was increased by the debate on private ownership in 1902. It was triggered by Sakūzov's parliamentary declaration that the Social Democratic Party was not an avowed enemy of all kinds of private property, but rather sought the socialization of the big means of production, the ownership of production that exploited human labor.¹⁸⁸ Answering to objections from deputies who considered it inconceivable that the Social Democrats desired an amelioration of the contemporary government, given the fact that they were committed enemies of private property, Sakūzov deemed it necessary to clarify in parliament the position of the party on the issue:

When we say that we are against private property this does not mean that we negate the right of the individual person to his possessions; we do not deny his right to his clothes, his food, his house, his cattle, his field; we do not negate ownership in itself; ... we are against the ownership of production that exploits human labor. We cannot be against an ownership that exploits the forces of nature. We consider that humanity will gradually move from private to socialized ownership. The state railways today are not private, but public property—property of the whole Bulgarian people, of all Bulgarian taxpayers. We think that the big means of production in Bulgaria, like in other countries, will gradually become social property. When we say that we are against private property ... that does not mean that we intend to create turmoil in our country in order to destroy private ownership. We only say the following: that private ownership is beneficial in the development of humanity only during a certain period, with time it becomes an evil, exploiting foreign labor and has thus to be turned into social property. As you can see we are standing at the historical threshold of a certain development which might be of long or short duration; this is dependent on the conditions in every single country. *So when we say, that we are against private ownership, we have to understand simply the following. We are against the private ownership of capital or property which exploits foreign labor; and further that we are not against it today, and that we desire through social measures to avert all evils emanating from it today, at this moment.*¹⁸⁹

Sakūzov explained that the Social Democrats had no intention of creating turmoil in the country; he succeeded, however, in creating turmoil in his own party. For the Narrows, especially for Blagoev, the declaration provided further evidence of a major retreat from socialistic principles and signified an additional concession to petty-bourgeois democracy. For Blagoev the socialization of the means of production meant literally the socialization of everything. Before turning to the argumentation of the Broads, it is worthwhile to pinpoint another delicate contradiction related to the issue of modernization. In the passage, Sakūzov explained that the Social Democrats were temporarily (“for today”) neither against the concentration of capital nor against the creation of big private ownership. And how could they be? Capitalism, like industrialization, was the desideratum rather than the outright enemy. The Bulgarian Social Democrats were not facing the actual monster of advanced capitalism, but rather its menacing phantom. In this transitional phase, the contradictory role of the Social Democrats became most apparent. The Broads would seek to bridge this gap through intermediary positions by providing socialism not only with an oppositional, but also with a positive profile. As in the case of Gabrovski (the state as an intermediary, the organization of production on a cooperative basis), Sakūzov sought the alleviation of the progressively alienated social strata through social measures.

The Broads considered the ownership issue an open-ended theoretical topic which had yet to be settled, and was unclear even within Western social democracy. It was for evolution to show the content of, and the means towards the socialization process. The Broads’ attitude towards the ownership issue was motivated not only by theoretical considerations, but also by reasons of political expediency: the desire to avoid alienating the small producers and particularly the peasantry. The ownership issue was apparently a highly principled matter for the Narrows and remained also in the future a barrier for any kind of rapprochement between them and the Agrarians.¹⁹⁰ The Broads claimed Sakūzov’s exposition on ownership represented not a retreat from principle, but rather the appropriate understanding of the party program which demanded the transformation of the private means of capitalistic production, as the principal source of the poverty and oppression of the exploited classes, into collective property. Only private ownership accumulated as a result of capitalistic production came into question. It was

neither in the spirit nor in the theory of social democracy to deny all kinds of property which would have meant the active destruction of every private possession of whatever means of production. Social democracy would extract no gain by becoming an enemy of all social strata, apart from the proletariat, by presenting socialism as the menace of all producers of contemporary times. Socialism was the child of capitalistic production which was seeking to do away with the contradictions between socialized production and private appropriation, which was to be found only in the domains of labor governed by capitalism. Since socialism was not the result of any kind of private property in general—private ownership had existed for thousands of years without socialism being possible—the goal of social democracy was not to destroy every kind of private property.

It was useless and purposeless to drive the concept of socialization to its extremes.

To deny in absolute terms all kind of private property in future society means to imagine an order in which the individual personality and the family will be of no significance, where individualism will be lost in society, which is neither the goal nor the consequence of the socialist ideal. On the contrary, the individual personality will be liberated from the limitations of contemporary order, and it will rise and have the possibility to manifest its strength in society only when the best conditions for a happy life, also within the sphere of the family, are guaranteed.¹⁹¹

The individual personality and the family would always be in need of certain things over which they would have to exercise absolute control and in fact own them as property. This kind of private property was not in contradiction with socialist production nor did it hinder social development, since it was indispensable for the existence of the free personality.

But a discussion of these issues was altogether premature. Social democracy grasped only the tendencies of economic development, but was incapable of predicting the future form of socialist society. Even the keenest Social Democrat could not portray the future social order and even the greatest theoreticians disagreed among them. Moreover, the distant future was of less interest for social democracy. At stake were rather the immediate tasks and the end goal. The end goal was the beginning of socialist society—the victory of the proletariat and the

creation of the basis for socialist order. The forms the socialization of production would assume were an open-ended topic. For sure, the aim of socialist society was to eradicate the exploitation of human labor and liberate the proletariat from the chains of its dependency. In order to achieve this, it would have to expropriate the ownership that kept it in slavery. Yet the fortunes of other forms of ownership, whose existence was not dependent on exploited labor, like the things of personal usage, housing, the fields of the self-producing peasant, the atelier of the artist and, more generally, things considered indispensable for the livelihood and the development of the free personality, did not necessarily have to be turned into socialized property. To proclaim that after the victory of the proletariat everything would be turned into collective property, that the petty owners would be expropriated and forced into association, was no scientific claim. "Social democracy is not preoccupied with such fantasies ... it means forgetting that social life does not develop according to recipes, that a society is not born like a chicken from an egg, but develops and consequently ... that the coming of socialist society is possible with the existence of a certain kind of private property."¹⁹² Big enterprises would be turned into collective property, while the rest—the slow extinction of petty production—would be completed by the socialist society itself. It was not improbable that the majority of the petty producers would be attracted by the advantages of big socialist production and would willingly abandon petty production. However, socialist society would not forcibly expropriate them.

14. The Debate on Party Membership

The wrangling for control over the party and the diverging notions of what social democracy ultimately stood for were manifested best in the debate on party membership. The debate could stand also as a holistic metaphor for the whole range of issues that separated the two sides, summed up in two very different notions of party types. In essence the debate on party membership reflected the culmination of the already perturbed coexistence within the party, as the polarization of the two fronts was to exceed the simple ideological level, reaching the stage where a practical solution was required. The debate was about ideological, political and, foremost, organizational borders. The discussion initiated by the Narrows evolved around the admission procedures for new party members, reflecting partially a real fear that the party was attracting malcontents and not “real soldiers.” The blurred social origins and the lack of ideological solidification of the party members were leading to a “dangerous” permeability, diluting the ideological contours of the party and corroding its ideological profile. The looming fundamental question was, of course, the character of the Social Democratic Party itself. Was it to be a mass activist party with a broad and flexible political profile—not necessarily losing its socialist character, but rather upholding an adaptable and inclusive class discourse—, or was it to be a narrow party of convinced Marxist cadres, theoretically consolidated, politically intransigent, and skeptically predisposed towards any extension beyond the theoretically prescribed line of action? Given the social fabric within which the Social Democrats had to operate, the question was highly important.

The Narrows demanded an end to this permeability, either by erecting a barrier on new admissions for a certain period of time (proposed by N. Harlakov), or by making a special theoretical preparation mandatory for all new party members destined to enter party ranks as suggested by G. Georgiev. The intention was obviously to put a limit to party membership and exercise a greater control over its ideological horizon. The Narrow barricading should be read in the

light of a series of problems that erupted in several local organizations (Plovdiv, Sofia, Pleven, Popovo, Sliven) splitting them into conflicting groups.¹⁹³ The fear was that all too many “petit-bourgeois” elements were intruding into the party, moving it thus progressively to the “right.” The Broads contested the precondition whereby party membership was to be contingent upon mastery of Marxist theory, arguing that it was quite sufficient for a party member to be a supporter of the party program. Preference for the Social Democrats could be motivated through a variety of reasons, be it disappointment with the other political parties, by reading bourgeois economists, or simply through the empirical study of contemporary Bulgarian reality. “*We are a party of action. We would become ridiculous if we started rejecting the people who want to unite their efforts with ours in order to achieve our goals on the grounds that they are not Marxists.*”¹⁹⁴ It was not even clear what the appellation “Marxist” precisely signified, but it could be broadly claimed that Marxism was the system encompassing the most significant positions of Marx and Engels:

Everything that is a result of the application of these general views is not compulsory for the followers, because the application of these principles on the evolving reality in different times and conditions produces different results. We consider that even those who accept only an insignificant part of the basic principles can be considered a Marxist if he ... solemnly follows Marx's method and retains a tendency to explain phenomena from a Marxist point of view, while making use of the work of other scholars as well. Such a Marxist is secure against the danger of imposing on reality a theoretical lid, because for him, Marxist exegesis is only an intellectual tendency that can be deserted in the first contradiction with reality, giving priority to the second. We think that even such a broadly understood Marxism cannot be compulsory for our party members. Such compulsory measures are made impossible also by the fact that the majority of the members are working people who have neither the time nor the possibility to study these facts from which Marxist theory is deduced, nor can they grasp all the areas where Marxist theory is applied.¹⁹⁵

The assertion that giving free way to non-Marxist elements was dangerous, leading the party to stray onto a different path, could not be sustained. If it were to the benefit of the country that the party divert theoretically and change its initial path, it would be only a minority that would deny this service just for the sake of some theoretical

purity. This again was not a vote against Marxism, but a signal of the impossibility to vote Marxism compulsory for the party. If Marxism were a viable theory it would always have strong and passionate supporters within the party. The party could profit from non-Marxist views, serving as protection against the extremities and one-sidedness of Marxist enthusiasm. Some adherents of Marxism considered any aberration from the views of the big thinker as sacrilege. "It is not enough to share the basic views of the thinker; you also have to admit that all the assertions this thinker made, applying his own basic views, are valid for all times, and to treat certain phenomena the same way he treated them. To be a follower of the great man ... means to copy him in everything, and not to go beyond his assertions—even when reality and new research lead in exactly the opposite direction."¹⁹⁶ This kind of theoretical conceptualization produced disciples stifled by the opinion of their teachers whereby "every change in the opinion of the first was an insult to the second." Accepting the teachings of Marx as an absolute unsurpassable and stifled canon signified the abandonment of dialectics, "according to which there existed no eternal truths, but an eternal development of thought through a negation of the negation, etc."¹⁹⁷

Dimitrov emphasized the relativity of truth and the sociological character of the knowledge-gaining process. It was impossible to accept uncritically the vast teachings of Marx, bypassing the issue of hermeneutics and disregarding the limitation of theory. Being a Marxist meant much more than simply repeating word for word the assertions of the big master. "Of course it is not our job to explain that a truth, as soon as it is asserted, is not the same as it was in the head of its author; that every truth changes its contents with the discovery of new facts and is relative to the various applications that are made of it; that every truth changes its meaning relative to the discovery of higher truths of its own kind, and depends on the kind of association it is placed in relation to other truths; that according to such changes, truth can appear in its initial form only relative to interpretation and limitation, and according to other changes, the old assertion does not correspond anymore to the contents of truth and has thus to be given a new form."¹⁹⁸ Furthermore it was important to keep in mind that the majority of the members of the party were not trained Marxists but practitioners:

A big part of the workers in the party develop empirically *a particular kind of socialism* by reading the *Workers' Newspaper* or other more accessible articles on Bulgarian issues in socialist magazines, by listening to speeches, etc. The desired goal is that they soon fathom [our principles] and become capable of defending and propagandizing them. This circle of members often nourishes a certain hatred for their colleagues who like to boast about literature, as they learn phrases by heart from the popular Marxist brochures. They become indifferent to the orator who torments them with such phrases, while they always take up with enthusiasm everything that is not in the language of the popular brochures, but explains phenomena from our social and political reality *in simple Bulgarian*. These are the people of lived reality, who have neither time nor great zest for bookish life. They form their worldview *by absorbing from the air* and every attempt to indoctrinate them with literary truths repulses them. These people, according to our opinion, will always constitute the majority in our party. The more often the "theoreticians" abandon the phrases of brochure-socialism, and the more they start to delve in our reality and start speaking its language, rather than applying to it various ready-made moulds [*kalăp*], the more light they will bring into the midst of this majority, and the more people from this majority will succeed in developing all their forces and capacities for the socialist cause.¹⁹⁹

Dimitrov emphasized that Marxism was not the only way to reach and appreciate the party program. If the minimum or even the maximum program could be reached through these channels, other ways were also legitimate. For that precise reason neither "broad" nor "narrow" Marxism could be made compulsory in the statutes of the party. For party members it was obligatory to accept and support the program, but they had to be free in the thinking process that brought them close to the party. Party discipline should be applied only with respect to action, but not with respect to thinking processes. There is a great temptation, sustained also by communist historiography, to "read" the barricading by the Narrows as a kind of narrow, proto-Leninist party conception. However, the Narrows were far removed from a conception of the party as a small elite, a highly conspirative and strongly disciplined association of professional revolutionaries. In this respect, Lenin distanced himself clearly both from the conception of Marx and from the practice of the Marxist parties of Western Europe, returning rather to indigenous Russian revolutionary traditions (Tkachev). Lenin's strategy was driven by a will to subordinate spontaneity (the mass movement) to consciousness (the party), that is, to control and direct reality according

to revolutionary will. Very different was the logic driving the Narrows, whose barricading demonstrated also a desire to control, however, as anticipation of the fulfillment of the Marxian law of historical evolution. The Narrows were following the Western prototype of a mass proletarian party, and they certainly did not perceive the party as a revolutionary power-winning device. The party had to maintain purity and orthodoxy until the irresistible triumph of capitalism, which would also create the mass army of proletarians that would carry the party to victory. The main task of the party was thus to inculcate the working class with class-consciousness and to simply wait. It was an adamant commitment to and faith in the infallibility of Marxian ideology, whereby the less the concrete circumstances seemed to correspond to the dictates of theory, the more theory was turned into a dogma. In fact, it was precisely these conditions of backwardness that reinforced the dogmatic intransigence, in the same way they triggered the revisionism of the Broads. The greater the discrepancy between theory and reality, the greater the need to barricade oneself from the latter. The greater the backwardness, the greater the need to sustain ideological orthodoxy. The Socialist Party had to be the embodiment of theory, and thus the party could not alter ideology, rather the ideology had to shape the party.

The tension between the mass party and the party of principles was not only a preoccupation of the Narrows. Similar concerns were voiced also by the BANU as it transformed from a movement into a party. The BANU took measures early on to regulate membership, party discipline and the political behavior of its parliamentary group. The two parties, however, were driven by quite different motivations. In the case of the Narrows, objections were primarily of an ideological nature; in the case of the Agrarians, the considerations were predominantly practical and political. For the latter, the necessity to enforce regulatory statutes was the result of the "leakage" to other established parties of the first agrarian deputies elected to the 11th National Assembly (1901). Of the 23 agrarian deputies elected, all but seven joined other parties in the parliament. This bitter fact led to a series of decisions aiming at diminishing the influence of other parties on the Union. The Agrarians adopted restrictions on the mode of selecting election convention delegates from the *druzhbi* (village societies), based on the length of time that a person was a *druzhba* member, on the size and contributions of the local organizations, on the size of the gov-

erning council, etc. Interestingly, a barrier was also erected against the infiltration of intellectuals. Any individual that sought national office as an Agrarian had to have had at least a five-year membership in the party.²⁰⁰ As we witnessed also in the case of the Serbian Radicals, a strict and thorough party organization was a recipe for success. Despite similar preoccupation with qualifying factors as expressed both by the Narrows and the Agrarians, pragmatic conditions determined the fruition of such measures for both parties, since a significant quantitative difference existed between them. The Agrarians could rely on two-thirds of the Bulgarian population for their peasant organization. In fact, they could afford it. The Agrarians realized quite quickly the dangers involved in bartering for power in a highly unprincipled political game, such as the one in Bulgaria. The problem consisted not in the absence of parties upholding specific ideals, that is, the absence of parties of principle, but rather in the unprincipled mechanics of the political game (more on this below), which in many ways neutralized and invalidated the profile of the political parties.

15. The Predicament of Bulgaria

The practice of social democracy, as emphasized Dimitrov, was a progressive movement aiming at the realization of the end goal, a process in which every moment had its own weight and significance. The objective was to move society towards higher stages, towards forms of increased productivity, with the greatest possible participation of the broad masses, enabling them to profit from the fruits of their productivity. The predicament in the Bulgarian case, however, rested elsewhere. How should a proletarian party, a party of social development, behave considering the fact that Bulgaria was not suffering from capitalism, but rather from the lack of it? The proletariat consisted of about 500 workers organized in the party and 150 organized in syndicates. Also, according to Dimitrov, the condition of unequal development would spur a toying with developmental models that would try to make the best maximum use of the situation of “backwardness.” Dimitrov did not envision a leaping ahead in evolution, as the Russian Populists did, but rather thought in cost-effective terms, on how to direct evolution in the most meaningful way. His thought, nevertheless, demonstrates a structural similarity to the Russian Populists. Their preoccupations departed from the same starting point: how to minimize the social cost of progress.

According to Dimitrov, capitalism remained for Bulgaria *a desired level of social development*, a phase the country had yet to go through in its evolution towards the end goal. The development of capitalism varied from country to country. In one country it was led by a strong bourgeoisie, in another by a strong bourgeoisie obstructed in every step by the remnants of a feudal regime, in another through an almighty bureaucracy, in yet another through a strong democracy, protecting the population from complete degeneration by controlling the appetites of the bourgeoisie. The different forms of economic development depended from the historical conditions in every country.

While the presence of a strong bourgeoisie could lead to a faster replacement of the old forms of production, to a quicker proletarianiza-

tion of the population, this procedure entailed great social convulsions. When the period of the initial accumulation of capital was over, the bourgeoisie could show a more humane face and a more humane attitude in legislation. But in a society of low culture, the omnipotence of the bourgeoisie was a curse for the working population. Some socialists advocated that the more the situation deteriorated, and the worst things got, the better it was for the Socialists because the bigger the army of socialism would grow. But this was not necessarily an advantage. The opinion prevailed that a quick economic development coupled with the degeneration of the population did not signify in essence a positive societal development. Equally, economic development through an omnipotent bureaucracy was not to the benefit of the people, nor really to the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Such a development was usually coupled with greater abuses and was often slower, more unfair, unsystematic and did not lead to great changes.

The question which arose, was which way should Bulgaria chose in order to create all beneficial conditions for the capitalistic development of the country, while at the same time organizing the social resistance against the devastating and exploiting strivings of the bourgeoisie or the united appetites of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. Which were the elements that could carry this resistance through? Was there a form of democracy that when organized appropriately could promote social development to the simultaneous benefit of the broad working masses?

The intellectuals and the syndicates were a start, yet the army for this development was to be found among the peasants and the crafts. They were the disintegrating strata inclined to fight for a democratic order, which would enable them to express their opinion on the development of the economic situation. This way they would gradually restrict the advantageous position of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie by allowing for privileges only to the degree that was necessary for development. The strategy of the Social Democratic Party should be: "with the bourgeoisie for the development of capitalistic production, with the peasants and the crafts for democracy and the limitation of the appetites of the bourgeoisie ... we cannot prefer the quick development of capitalism without democracy to the slower development of capitalism with democracy ... above all we want democracy. The question socialism or democracy does not exist. Through democracy to socialism."²⁰¹

16. Theory and Practice

A deeper and incessant preoccupation with theoretical problems remained at the core of Sakūzov's analysis of concrete Bulgarian circumstances. The dialectics and restraints of theory and practice consumed a major part of his intellectual reflections, and he returned periodically to the crux of this most contested partnership. For it had been, indeed, his contention that the diverging perceptions between Broads and Narrows were due to an "unreflected" implantation of Marxist theory irrespective of the specifics of the Bulgarian context. Sakūzov insisted that it was not so much the verification of theory in practice that mattered, but rather the use of theory as a tool of analysis and orientation in understanding the real and intervening in the concrete. This "flexibility" was not a result of a "lack of principle" or a "distaste" for theoretical engagements; on the contrary, it grew from his understanding of the reciprocity between *theory and life*. He articulated this relationship most explicitly in an article in *Die Neue Zeit* entitled "The source, essence and limits of theory."²⁰²

All theories—scientific, philosophical and, particularly, social—came about as a result of the needs of human society. The creation of theories was the outcome of the ascendance of specific classes in the social scene. This had been the case with the theory of absolutism at the end of the Middle Ages, liberalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and equally with the modern theory of socialism. A social theory was devised in order to bind the social strivings of individuals intelligibly into a theoretical entirety, in order to give them a goal and purpose. All social theories had, consequently, social roots. However, despite their needs, not all societies produced theories of social development. Social theories emanated only in societies where long-standing struggles of a subordinate tribe against a hegemonic one, or of a suppressed class against a ruling one, predominated. On the contrary, in societies where needs did not segregate the population into classes, and where there was no developed feeling of class solidarity, theories did not come into being, and these societies had no need for

them either. Thus a social theory was the accretion of the ideal of an ascending class, from the moment it realized its immediate interests until it reached its final goal, that is, until it rose to the status of a dominant class. Only ascending classes, which by way of their rise to power confronted ruling ones, produced social theories and compelled their opponents to produce counter-theories in the process. The theories of ascending classes contained both a corrosive and a restructuring character, while the theories of the ruling classes relied on the maintenance of order and had naturally a defensive character. The first were revolutionary, the last consisted of stabilization theories. As no such thing as immobile human societies exist, every standstill was an attempt to impede the forward march of the progressive forces, so, logically, the theories of stability were transformed into theories of reaction.

European history had witnessed the rise of two truly ascending social classes. The bourgeoisie, which commenced its ascendancy in the mediaeval Italian republics in the fourteenth century, and later in Holland and England (seventeenth century), France (eighteenth century) and which, by the nineteenth century, had successfully come to dominate almost the whole of Europe. The second, the proletariat, entered the stage at the end of the eighteenth century in England and by the end of the nineteenth came to the fore everywhere in Europe. Consequently, there were two real social theories, liberalism and socialism, which represent two different ages, types of production and ways of human coexistence. By its nature, theory was a generalization of phenomena. Socialist theory was only "the insight into the preconditions, the path and the general results of the proletarian movement." Socialist theory was an ideal description of the general fortunes of the workers' movement in the capitalistic world:

In this definition of theory there are two significant instances. Firstly, theory is predominantly an *abstraction* of all possible concrete forms that a specific workers' movement actually takes; that means that theory selects only the *general traits* of this movement; it presents us—in other words—with an abstract workers' movement. Secondly, it is an anticipation of the possible development and outcome of this movement. This means that theory *outruns* real development and presents us with a development that has not actually *taken place*. Social theory is an anticipation *in abstracto*. Theory always retains this essence independently of whether the abstraction is correct or not, whether it springs from concrete phenomena or

whether the anticipation will correspond to the real flow of the future events. Its essence remains unchanged, independently of whether it is correct or false. The assessment of the correctness or falsity of a social theory is not to be found in its logical construction ...²⁰³

Every social theory contained limits: the degree of its influence was not solely dependent on its exact abstract congruence with the phenomena it described, but was contingent also upon other conditions.

Every theory contains its own limits, in its own essence. Its *abstractions* cannot replace the factual *concretion* of phenomena, nor can the ideal description of the flow of phenomena replace the actual movement itself. Moreover, every theory deduces the abstract movement of phenomena out of a whole complex of surrounding and intertwined correlative phenomena. These phenomena are never found in such an ordered, logical and abstract form in reality, but represent rather live and concrete, multiple and commingling aggregates. The value of a theory cannot consist in the *replacement of reality*, but in its *illumination*. It must serve as a means of *orientation* in the diversity of reality ...

In life, individuals dealt with the concrete correlation of phenomena, and human struggles aimed at real facts and events, and not at theoretical abstractions. Theory was a protection against the dispersal inherent in the diversity and the alleged contradictions of phenomena. It could assist the explanation of a certain correlation, help the researcher become conscious of small or big irregularities or aberrations, but it could not help him/her surmount the issue of diversity or irregularity. In reality, struggle took place within life. It was necessary to confront it in its actual form and not in its written version. Sakūzov concluded with an appeal for openness towards the unpredictability of life and against its immolation on the altar of theoretical purity: "The limits of influence of a theory are thus given by life itself in the factual intertwining and complexity of phenomena. *If, after repeated attempts and efforts, it is proven that the light of theory cannot illuminate the way*, it is the theory that has to be dropped or changed. After all, it is life that corrects or buries theories, because it is life that produces them."²⁰⁴

There were, however, also other limits of theory. A theory was initially the result of the narrow social needs of a class, whose limits of influence were contained within the limits of that class itself. Howev-

er, with its ensuing growth and influence over other social classes, its teachings acquire a greater and broader social significance, becoming authoritative for them as well. The more authoritative the ascending class is, the more it raises the status of its doctrines to a general theory of social progress, so that the initially narrow class borders are broadened out to the confines of modern society. The influence of theory, initially meant to serve the narrow development of a class, is extended to a theory of general social development. Reciprocally, the ascending class, determined to become hegemonic over all others, has to broaden its theory by assimilating more and more elements, acquiring the dimensions of a universal worldview, a philosophy of the whole of mankind. This was the case with the theory of the bourgeoisie at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and such was to be the case with the theory of the proletariat, as developed by contemporary Marxism, from the status of a class theory to one of modern social development, embracing all humanity. It is thus the historical strength of a class which enlarges the borders of theory, Sakūzov argued.

17. How to Make Sense of Broad Socialism

Tracing the different ideological layers and their eclectic amalgamation in the discourse of the adherents of Broad Socialism seems a much more fruitful exercise than simply verifying Sakūzov's revisionism. The intellectuals that came gradually to form this group derived their ideas from a variety of thinkers, from which they picked and molded whatever they deemed appropriate. Despite the conspicuous influence of Bernstein, they incorporated also Lassalle, David, the neo-Kantians, the German Agrarian Reformists, populist themes, etc. It is precisely this aspect of ideological independence of the "broad heresy" that constitutes its most fascinating aspect, at least in its initial fermentation period (1900–1903). The Broad "revolt" crystallized out of a process of ideological experimentation, as an intense soul-searching for more suitable answers to the problems of Bulgarian society. It arose out of the contradictions in the application of theory and dilemmas springing out of the confrontation with everyday political practice. In contrast to their Greek pendant, the "Sociologists" (see subsequent chapter), who entered the political arena already equipped with reformatory socialism as part of their academic baggage, the Broads arrived gradually at reformatory socialism through impasses on the level of political practice and after a quasi ten-year involvement with basis politics. The Broads contested the extremities of the "revolutionary" maximalist phraseology for several reasons. First, because it alienated several important segments of the population. The Agrarians showed a persistent aversion against being labeled as petty-bourgeois and would not discuss the issue of private property, while the handicrafts were still a professional element to be strongly reckoned with. And second, because it did not provide for any concrete temporal measures to address the concrete problems of social reality in Bulgaria. It was out of these dilemmas that Broad socialism was born, for it enabled intellectuals to work with the social material at hand and ease the contradictions arising from the discrepancy between the introduction of socialism as an ideology of modernity epitomizing the universality of capitalist development and the

local conditions of “backwardness.” The contradictions they were up against were not negligent. Contrary to theoretical expectations, the peasant was not withering away; instead he chose to become vocal and political. If the Bulgarian Social Democrats intended to be strictly a class party, growing proportionately to the growth of the proletarian class (the orthodox scenario), they could as well content themselves with an intellectual salon. If, on the contrary, they decided to become a broad workers’ party, they would have to address seriously the social strata in question (artisans, peasants, etc.). If the Bulgarian Social Democrats were to take the issue of agrarian agitation seriously, they could not avoid realizing that they were entering into contradictions with official ideology. Equally, as Social Democrats, they could not sustain a discourse emphasizing the necessity for capitalistic growth, while criticizing capitalism and its effects at the same time.²⁰⁵ Last, but not least, social democracy was a theory looking into the future, predicting the collapse of capitalism and the victory of the proletariat. The Bulgarian Social Democrats, however, had to live in the present, a present that seemed not only very remote from the prospect of revolution, but from the development of industrial capitalism proper. Revisionism allowed for a compromise and a synthesis of all these complicated and contradictory roles.

Instead of waiting for the verification of the inevitable scenario, revisionism²⁰⁶ allowed for a critique of the bourgeois order, while still reserving a prominent role for the working class. It also provided for intermediate and immediate solutions by emphasizing the significance of legalistic struggle, the value of constitutionalism, the importance of cooperation, the step-by-step amelioration of social and economic conditions: all elements that according to Socialists from “backward” countries required immediate application. More importantly, it allowed for the tackling of the most contradictory role mentioned above: the possibility of combining social critique with the imperative of economic growth. From a comparative perspective, if populism (as in the case of the Serbian Radicals in the 1870s) was a straightforward cancellation, or skipping over, of a whole period of modernization, and if social democracy was the verification of one and inescapable modernization process, then revisionism was something in-between. By questioning the inevitable process of capitalistic development, it provided space for

variegated paths to socialism, a circumstance that could help socialists who had problems “reading” the Western developmental scenario *vis-à-vis* their own societies make sense of “backward” countries. The Broads suggested a middle way between voluntarism and determinism. Unlike the Populists, they accepted the inevitability of capitalism and made use of the analytical arsenal of Marxism, and unlike the Determinists, they insisted on flexibility, inclusiveness and pragmatism. To Blagoev’s theoretical puritanism, the Broad fraction counterpoised more flexible and inclusive class discourse and tactics, and advocated a Marxist analysis informed as much by theoretical guidelines as by a more empiricist and contingent approach to practical politics. Theory did not simply fulfill itself, but had to be tested and adapted to the specific needs on the ground. It is important to underline that revisionism signified quite different things in the Western context where it was born, and in the Bulgarian context where it was adapted. In the former the debate centered around the question about the future of advanced industrial capitalism and the relationship between revolutionary theory and reformatory practice. In the latter it centered around the question of the development of capitalism itself.

Both revisionism and neo-Kantianism²⁰⁷ proved handy also in another respect. With their emphasis on the moral, voluntaristic and universal appeal of socialism, which in a certain way detached the problematic of consciousness from a strict class-based understanding, it proved quite suitable for encompassing larger sections of the discontented population and addressing them in a language and a moral code that was already familiar to them. It allowed for the integration of the “moral economy” of the exposed and jeopardized social layers into a socialist vision of justice and equality. At the same time it could justify the protectionism that these strata were seeking by upgrading the role of the state as a modernizer and regulator of wealth and labor by avoiding the exigencies of *laissez-faire* economic liberalism. Similar ideas on the regulatory role of the state were shared equally by Stamboliiski.²⁰⁸ The centrality attributed to the state as a regulator and stimulator of economic growth and as guarantor of welfare was nothing new; before Bernstein it had dominated the thought of Louis Blanc and Lassalle as well. Universal suffrage would empower the workers, who in turn would compel the state to give in to their demands.²⁰⁹

The appeal of revisionism rested also in its insistence on the merits of immediate tasks and the downgrading of the ultimate goal to one of secondary importance. This allowed for immediate action and intervention in the present, making the dependence on certain prerequisites or preconditions of capitalistic development relevant or contingent. Thus, if the Western scenario did not correspond precisely with the Bulgarian situation, there were still things to be done and ameliorated. Revisionism's relativization of class conflict, the stressing of a common interest of all classes in civil values and especially the possibilities of furthering political rights within the context of a functional democracy, seemed more than relevant in the Bulgarian context for several reasons. Firstly, because the broad coalition basis between workers, peasants, etc., proposed by Bernstein, seemed to suit better the social composition of countries where economic "backwardness" stripped class struggle of its cutting edge. Moreover, it allowed for the incorporation of the middle classes into a socialist scenario, instead of condemning them *sui generis* as a conservative bunch. Secondly, because it touched upon crucial problems of political organization, in this case the shaky foundation of the democratic institutions in Bulgarian politics.

Sakūzov's insistence that the "common cause" strategy was only a temporal measure related to more flexible tactics resembles strongly the argumentation of the "reformist" Bavarian Social Democrats and is an indication that he must have been well informed about the internal discourses in the SPD. At the same time, it should be emphasized that nowhere did Sakūzov endorse all aspect of Bernstein's critique, like his critique of the theory of value or Hegelian dialectics. Moreover, he never affirmed the ultimate consequences of revisionist thought, that is Bernstein's refutation of the "catastrophe thesis." In this respect Sakūzov proved to be more of an agnostic than a conformer. In fact, the Broads never doubted that Bulgaria was developing or was going to develop along the lines of Western capitalism. Bulgaria was simply not there yet. Sakūzov and his colleagues seemed to read revisionism through "Bulgarian glasses." He appeared to relate to revisionism through two basic prisms, the political experience gained through a decade of political action, and his analysis of what constituted the historical problems of the development of Bulgarian society and politics. The failure of the "Union" to create a movement based

on a pure syndicalist basis exposed blatantly the most basic assumption of socialist theory, and shifted the emphasis more and more towards the political sphere. Here again, Sakūzov warned against a “euphoric” overestimation of the role of social democracy in Bulgarian politics, realizing that the party was too weak to head on its own. The realization of the differences in the social composition between Bulgarian society and the “Western prototype” did not induce him to reject the latter, but rather ascertained the necessity of acknowledging the disparity and coping with it. Equally, his appeal for a “common cause”—undeniably a borrowing from Bernstein’s understanding of the growth of representative democracy as a higher stage of civilization—had further implications related to concrete Bulgarian circumstances. The “common cause” strategy grew out of two specific calculations: a socio-economic and a political one. The first related to the weakness of the Bulgarian social forces, which did not act as articulate and crystallized pressure groups, a weakness that was determined by historical development. Their cooperation was to serve the immediate imperative of economic growth. The second reflected the necessity of uniting all social forces available, particularly the big percentage of the “center” as a pressure group, which could act as a bulwark against political reaction and the “personal regime.”

These considerations in turn induced him and his colleagues to the search for a model that would allow for the economic growth needed, while providing at the same time for the protectionist strategy demanded by the exposed social strata. The only mediating instance available was the state. That is what made reformatory politics, or *Staatssozialismus*, more attractive and more feasible. This is probably also the point where Sakūzov and Gabrovski found each other. Their viewpoints coalesced on the agrarian question, albeit with different emphasis, and on the nature of the political problems: the imperative of abolishing the personal regime, the mediating and interventionist role of the state, the imperative of immediate action, a preference for politics involving improvisation and negotiation, and the necessity of developing an organic relationship to theory, beyond theoretical taboos. It should be mentioned here that Gabrovski did not espouse the theoretical revision accompanying the “common cause” thesis, rather he appreciated its practical connotations. Gabrovski proved to be consistent in his stance.

In the initial debate between the Party and the Union, he had favored the political solution. In the new controversy in the BWSDP, to the extent to which it evolved around the issue whether the political struggle should be broadened to cover various strata of the population, he once again favored the broadest possible political solution. As for Sakūzov, the incomplete establishment of an operative democracy that would serve as the foundation of Bulgarian politics remained a persistent trait of his political concerns.

18. Rethinking Bulgarian Politics

The role of the left and more specifically the emergence of Broad socialism cannot be understood independently of the political system operating in Bulgaria. The issue of the democratic deficit remained a pressing topic as the political system glided progressively into a kind of “regulated arbitrariness.” The promising liberal political life, inaugurated in 1879 through the Tŭrnovo Constitution, proved unable to live up to its liberal pledge, violated already in the late 1880s, initially by the arbitrary rule of Stefan Stambolov, and later on through the establishment of King Ferdinand’s autocratic “personal regime,” which elevated him as the principal arbiter of political balances in Bulgaria until his dethronement in 1918. The blatant adulteration of democratic procedures and the consequent derailment of the political game into an internal arrangement between Ferdinand and the political elites sealed the fate of constitutionalism in Bulgaria and allowed for an unstable and fragile political system, characterized by the perpetual fragmentation of the political world and the negligence of the political elite to connect to the base. In what developed into a ritualized and unofficially institutionalized practice, political elites received their legitimization principally from above and rarely from below. Political practice in Bulgaria developed the traits of a closed and exclusive political system, radicalizing a good segment of the intelligentsia, and simultaneously “setting free” the social forces at the base. The agrarian movement and all the complex socio-economic reasons that contributed to its inception and development are indicative both of the process of political alienation of the countryside and the inability of the political system to absorb and neutralize social cleavages. The socio-economic stimulus coincided with a cleavage of political non-representation, aggravated particularly by the defeats in the Balkan and First World wars. The violations of constitutional legality, which contributed to the endemic crisis of instability of the political system, were caused in the first place by intentional interventions aiming directly at a manipulation and curtailment of constitutional rights. Examples of this include the restrictive

1881 electoral law and the constitutional changes undertaken by Stambolov in 1893. Secondly, they were brought about by the later “quasi-institutionalized” practice, exercised both by the governments and the monarch, of acknowledging the constitution, on the one hand, but not complying in any way with its democratic principles on the other.

The “personal regime” was as much a result of the autocratic tendencies of King Ferdinand as a failure of the political elites to counterpoise a viable political alternative. These two factors kept feeding off each other, in a spiral-like manner perpetuating the weakness of the political system. The “personal regime” simply thrived on, manipulated, and recycled precisely this weakness. Electoral procedures and the mode of ascendance of political parties to power is indicative of the adulterated political process. While electoral adulteration was not an uncommon practice in other Balkan countries, it is rather the absence of a minimum facade of legality that is striking about the Bulgarian case.

Until the end of the First World War—that is, in the span of forty years—thirty governments took turns, coming from different parties, but representing to a smaller or greater extent obedient instruments of the will and the power of the monarch. They received power from him when they were useful to him; he abandoned them as soon as his policy required such a change. From these governments, only three or four came to power through actual electoral successes of the party in question; the rest, were first nominated, then they dismantled the established government, called new elections, and according to electoral habits in Bulgaria, the newly appointed government almost always won the elections.²¹⁰

The following facts demonstrate how entrenched this procedure was:

In the elections for the 9th National Assembly [1896], the ruling Popular Party [*Narodniashka Partia*], founded only two years before, won 150 seats. Three years later, when Ferdinand distanced himself from it, it had only two deputies. Again in the elections for the 9th Assembly, the Progressive-Liberal Party [*Progresivno-Liberalna Partia*] achieved only one mandate, in the 10th Assembly, thirteen mandates, in the 12th (when it was the ruling party) it received 97, and in the next year (when it was in opposition) only 6. In the 8th National Assembly, the Radoslavist Party [a branch of the Liberals], at that time participating in the government with K. Stoilov, had 35 deputies; in the 9th, when the party was in opposition, it had 7; in the 10th, when it was the governing party, it had 114. After

two years, when again in opposition, it had five deputies. In the period of Stambolov's regime, his party [*Narodno-Liberalna Partia*] comprised 240 deputies; when it was evicted from government, it carried into the 9th National Assembly only three deputies.²¹¹

Comparatively similar unprincipled politics were played out in Romania as well. According to political tradition the King bestowed one of the two main political parties with power, which consequently always won elections. However, in Romania an institutionalized system of restricted electoral participation not only solidified but also provided legitimacy for oligarchic politics. The Romanian political system, institutionalized as closed and exclusive, was designed as a class system in order to ensure the preponderance of the ruling elites, with the explicit purpose of impeding mass politics. In other words, Romanian governments until 1914 barely needed legitimization from below; they were, however, by these means not violating the rules of the political system. Quite different was the case of Bulgaria, where an institutionalized open and democratic system was progressively and visibly curtailed, provoking thus a legitimacy crisis.

Characteristic of the Bulgarian political system is a conspicuous and rather excessive fragmentation of the political landscape. This circumstance becomes the more obvious when comparing the Bulgarian with the average number of political parties in neighboring Balkan countries. Throughout the nineteenth century Greece remained more or less a two-party system. This circumstance was perpetuated further, albeit in a very different constellation, through the particular political polarization of the inter-war period (the National Schism). In Serbia in the second half of the nineteenth century the political game was played out essentially between two or three parties, while Romania represented a rather well-entrenched two-party system as well. Quite different was the picture in Bulgaria, where the initial split between Conservatives and Liberals quickly gave away to a multitude of political formations. There existed at least three liberal parties, alongside the Nationals, the Democrats, the Radical-Democrats, the Progressives, the Agrarians, two branches of the Social Democrats, etc. The reasons for this perpetual splitting of the Bulgarian political world are multiple and exceed the scope of this work. However, what could be claimed with certainty is that this plethora of divisions and the creation

of multiple but frail political parties probably did not allow for long-lasting allegiances between political parties and the constituency, while it probably instigated extreme competition between political contenders. The fragmentation of the political world was as much the outcome as the perpetrator of the liberal/democratic deficit so characteristic of Bulgarian politics. The periodic return of regimes to arbitrary means and suppressive measures—even if only to maintain stability and contain the centrifugal tendencies created by social (e.g., agrarian) and political (e.g., Macedonia) cleavages—proved destabilizing in the long run and became an integral part of the political game, undermining the *raison d'être* of the system itself. Some issues appear evident when reflecting on Bulgarian politics. Bulgaria had a far more precarious international status than its Balkan neighbors. It acquired an autonomous status (1878) due to Russian intervention, a circumstance that elevated the Russian factor not simply to a significant, but a determining variable in Bulgarian politics. The insecurity of autonomy—Alexander Battenberg did not enjoy Russian recognition and Ferdinand was recognized only in 1896—but not full independence (achieved in 1908) made Bulgarian politicians very sensitive to international politics and constrained their political options. It is not by coincidence that russophilia and russophobia presented a major political cleavage in the internal political landscape, reverberating not only through political parties, but also through the army and public opinion. Blatant Russian intervention in Bulgarian politics complicated the already complicated scenery and, even worse, politicized the army at a very early stage. The international recognition of the princes became a central theme of Bulgarian foreign policy, elevating the monarch not only to a symbolically but also to a politically significant figure. Major efforts were channeled in this direction, obviously in an attempt to secure international prestige.²¹² In getting rid of Stambolov, his main political supporter, Ferdinand managed to locate himself as arbiter of the political scene by playing politicians against each other and manipulating precisely the major weakness of the liberal block—its fragmentation. Through effective control of the army and foreign policy and by playing the Macedonian card, he effectively secured control of the political system and advanced to become the major “broker” of the political game, at the latest by 1896. The predicament of political fragmentation was timely identified by Sakūzov as a major obstacle to the democratization of

Bulgarian political life. Although an adamant opponent of the personal regime, he had to acknowledge that the democratic deficit was not limited to Ferdinand's authoritarian rule. Rather, it was imperative that all similarly minded groups of the various existing parties "unite in a big bourgeois party aiming to establish and promote both modern production and modern government." Their hitherto attempts had failed due to the fact that their attempts to unite had not been really "organic." (Sakūzov was probably referring to various party coalitions created at different times as democratic blocks against suppressive governments. They represented, however, rather coalitions of individual parties and were for this reason prone to easy disintegration.) It was therefore necessary for either one of the existing parties to absorb elements from the other parties, or for a wholly new party to be created that would absorb the others and fulfill this task.²¹³

Concluding, it should be emphasized in general that social-democratic parties in the Balkans remained rather weak political formations and were characterized on the whole by ideological dogmatism (with exceptions, of course, such as the interesting contributions of the Romanian Dobrogeanu-Gherea, the theoretical attempts of the Bulgarian Broads, etc.). The fortunes of social democracy in the region ran different itineraries. Perturbations and oscillations between "left" and "right" took place within most social-democratic formations. The Serbian Social Democrats managed to avoid a split due to the fact that socialist intellectuals with reformatory inclinations (Skerlić, Jovanović, etc.), after an initial confrontation, parted ways with the SSDP (Serbian Social Democratic Party) and found it easy to integrate into the Independent Radicals, as already mentioned in the previous chapter. Also the challenge from the more radical left did not provoke splits. Despite casualties, confrontations and fragile balances, the Serbian Social Democrats managed to survive until the First World War more or less intact. The balancing and mediating role of some of the leading party figures could well have contributed to this result. In Romania, the social-democratic party founded in 1893 was dissolved in 1900 when a section of the party intellectuals, after frustrating experiences with the urban workers, a misfired attempt to attract the countryside and under the influence of neo-populism, defected to the Liberal Party. The revisionist debate barely had an echo in this country. This is to be credited to the fact that the imbroglio between agrarian structures and modernization was

played out in the first decade of the twentieth century as a theoretical confrontation between Marxism and neo-populism, rather than as an outright contention between Marxism and revisionism. neo-populism, as introduced and codified by Constantin Stere in the form of popo-ranism,²¹⁴ represented not only an adaptation of Russian *Narodničestvo* in Romanian conditions, but also provided the theoretical bridge to Romanian peasantry of the inter-war period.²¹⁵ In Bulgaria, the split between the Broads and the Narrows weakened an already weak movement. The reasons that led to the confrontation (the agrarian issue, increased suppression and curtailment of constitutional rights, etc.) subsided with the removal of the Radoslavov government. The Broads gradually abandoned the common cause formula, although they retained the option of cooperation with other democratic forces in cases of political necessity. Several of the reasons that had led to the crystallization of the two fronts seemed to subside. However, there was a lack of political will to come to an understanding, particularly from the side of the Narrows. The Bulgarian Social Democrats had capitalized on a wave of social and political protest around the turn of the century; with the ebbing of the wave, however, both fractions shrunk to their "real" dimensions. Despite a greater involvement in the labor movement, both fractions continued to function mostly as intellectual formations. Also, the early agrarian movement lost its momentum with the withdrawal of the tithe. The tide changed though, haltingly with the Balkan Wars and massively with the First World War, which also represents a structural break in Bulgarian politics. The anti-war stance of the Socialists (both fractions in the Balkan Wars and predominantly the Narrows in the First World War) and the Agrarians resulted in a constant rise in their mandate. It represented the deep popular resentment against the lost wars and the catastrophic conditions they left behind. The First World War was of course a destabilizing factor for all Balkan populations, and the political actors dealt with here. One need only think of the massive dislocation of populations in Southeastern Europe. The war was, however, more destabilizing for the losers like Bulgaria than for the winners like Greece and Serbia, who after all were rewarded with territorial augmentation. Nevertheless, the First World War clearly demonstrated the limits of the war weariness of the populations in the Balkans. In the case of Greece, it was manifested in the smashing and unexpected defeat of Eleftherios Venizelos, the leader of the Greek Liberals, whom

we will encounter closer in the next chapter, in the 1920 elections, an obvious—plebiscite-like—rejection of embarking on further military adventures in the Asia Minor campaign. In the case of Serbia, the war weariness was absorbed in the creation of the First Yugoslavia.

NOTES

- 1 The Bulgarian 1903 split preceded the bolshevik–menshevik split of the same year, the latter taking place in March, the former in August. The two events have often been connected, while in Bulgarian communist historiography their quasi-chronological symmetry was a matter of exceptional pride. However, the two splits had little in common with respect to their immediate causes. In the Russian case it involved “contrasting definitions of party membership,” in essence a controversy over the nature of the party, as foreseen in Lenin’s *What Is To Be Done?* In the case of Bulgaria it involved the relationship of the party towards the peasantry and other social strata, the content of political struggle, the issue on whether to cooperate politically with other progressive political forces in Bulgaria, the relationship of the party towards trade unions, etc. While the split in the Russian case was rather unexpected, in the Bulgarian case it was the result of a decade of incongruities between socialist intellectuals. However, in both cases—and this constitutes their common point of reference—the issue at stake was the question of the nature of the party. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*, 31–32.
- 2 By the 1890s the Bulgarian Social Democrats perceived the Serbian Radicals as renegades of socialism, who having thrown their initial socialist views overboard, degenerated into a petty-bourgeois party. This circumstance will be amply demonstrated below. The Romanian social-democratic party was founded in 1893. The agrarian question and the difficulty of putting theory into practice created some “thorny” issues for the Romanian socialists. Due to the “agrarian experiment” of 1898/99 and the official repression that followed, the party disintegrated, as several socialist intellectuals crossed over to the Liberal Party in 1900, an act that is commonly known as the “Treason of the Generous.” The Romanian Social Democratic Party was revived in 1910.
- 3 The chapter does not deal with the fortunes of the Broads and Narrows as independent parties after the split. The political life and profile of the two entities after the split and the continuation of their detrimental feud is another chapter. Moreover, altogether caution is advised when examining the subsequent development of both factions. Chronological demarcations in the ideological evolution of both factions should be taken seriously and their development examined procedurally.

- 4 Haupt, Georges, "German Social Democracy in South-Eastern Europe" in Georges Haupt, *Aspects of International Socialism*, 58.
- 5 J. Sakūzov to K. Kautsky, 18.5.1903 in Haupt, Jemnitz and Leo van Rossum, eds., *Karl Kautsky und die Sozial-Demokratie Südost-Europas*, 90.
- 6 The creation of the Agrarian Union and the broad dissent are discussed by Vladislav Topalov, who however views both phenomena in correlation to the process of class differentiation within Bulgarian society. Topalov departs from a structuralist analytical standpoint and is indicative of the "entrenchment" scholars in placard categorizations in the history of political movements. According to Topalov, the "fact, that soon after the rise of the BANU [Bulgarian Agrarian National Union], the creation of parties of the urban petty bourgeoisie followed suit, that being, the Broad Socialists and the Radicals, demonstrates that the creation of the BANU was not only due to the polarization between city and countryside ..., but is indicative of a much broader process, that of the political separation of the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The explanation for this process indisputably lies in the development of capitalistic relations and the concomitant intensification of class struggle." Topalov, "Osnovavane na bŭlgarskiiat zemedelski sŭiuz," 163ff. The classification of the Agrarians and the Broads as petty-bourgeois parties, respectively representing the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, serves the purpose of artificially separating other parties pertaining to the left from the Narrows. This classification is based on two assumptions. Firstly, on a functionalist stance, holding that the creation of parties is the precise reflection of social processes. And secondly, on the commonplace that the peasantry due to its insistence on private property is by nature petty-bourgeoisie and conservative.
- 7 Worth further investigation is the appearance of leftist, democratic parties around the turn of the century. In this category, along with the Broads also the Radical Democrats should be taken into consideration.
- 8 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, 77–78 (emphasis mine). Further: "In full correspondence to the degree of belated capitalistic development, in the Bulgarian workers' movement the intelligentsia plays a disproportionately important role. It carries an ideological zeal and a strong desire for socialist knowledge into the proletarian lines; but along with this, it carries also negative characteristics—on the one hand, the attempt to play a positive role at any price, which when the proletarian basis is weak, leads to dangerous alliances and temporary aberrations, and on the other, to fanaticism, dogmatic intransigence, producing constant splits and break ups." *Ibid.*, 81.
- 9 Kautsky, "Sotsialistite v ikonomicheski izostanalite nazad strani," 17–19 (emphasis mine).
- 10 Following the split of the party, the still underdeveloped labor movement split in turn the following year. In July 1904, the trade unions controlled by the Narrows organized in the *Obšt Rabotničeski Sindikalen Sŭiuz* (General Workers Trade Union Federation), while a month later the unions un-

der the influence of the Broads constituted themselves as the Free Trade Union Federation.

- 11 The classical account on the early socialist movement written in 1906 by Blagoev has served also as the blueprint for the perpetuation of the purism vs. opportunism thesis. See: Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata na sotsialisma v Bŭlgaria*.
- 12 Pitassio, "Janko Sakŭzov e Karl Kautsky, Un socialista balcanico di fronte al papa rosso," 282ff.
- 13 Dubowoj, *The Schism in the Bulgarian Socialist Movement*, 183.
- 14 Rothschild, *The Communist Party*, 27.
- 15 Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 259–261.
- 16 On this third split of the Bulgarian Social Democracy, see: Konstantinova, *Buntŭt na "Anarkholiberalite"*.
- 17 For a rather dissatisfactory biography of Gabrovski, see: Ginev, *Nikola Gabrovski*.
- 18 According to Georgi Pŭrvanov "The personal conflict between D. Blagoev and J. Sakŭzov was the basis for the ensuing split. The disintegration of parties was actively put in effect by destroying all ideological bridges between the various groups. That is, first there was the split, and then it was substantiated in theoretical terms." Pŭrvanov, "Sotsialdemokratizŭm i ideinite techeniia v bŭlgarskiat politicheski zhivot," 13.
- 19 Friction within the party revolved usually around the management of resources, issues like who was to stand as socialist candidate during elections and where or who would manage the party's publications. It has constituted part of communist mythology that the Narrows were pure idealists and had absolutely no interest in parliamentary mandates. For some interesting comments on Blagoev's alleged "disinterest" in deputy mandates, particularly mandates won in agricultural districts, see: Tsentralnii Partiinski Arkhiv, *Lichni spomeni ot Konstantin Bozveliev*—Dimitŭr Blagoev, Fon. 174. Janko Sakŭzov himself in the *Trevoga za prizratsi* (Alarm for ghosts) considers personal elements to have played an important role in the schism. However, Sakŭzov's explanation could be interpreted in the light of his intention to play down the ideological and theoretical differences between the two camps. It is clear that the Broads were not reckoning with a schism, and were taken by surprise as the Narrows—more precisely Blagoev—initiated the separation process. It could very well lie with Sakŭzov's "sincere" conviction that the disagreement was not unbridgeable and, moreover, that it constituted a healthy element in the internal development of party life.
- 20 Equally, rivalries that existed before the schism do not allow for a clear-cut pattern of action and reaction. E. Dabev (a Broad) entertained a strained relationship with G. Kirkov (a Narrow) when both functioned as editors of the party newspaper "Rabotnicheski Vestnik," but Dabev had a strained relationship also to K. Bozveliev (a Broad) for a certain period of time. N. Gabrovski along with Blagoev were the driving motors behind the creation of the party in 1891. The two men entered a fierce debate in 1895, when

Gabrovski started publishing a local newspaper entitled *Osvobozhdenie*. The debate revolved around the issue of centralized or decentralized management of the party and its publications. It ended with a party decision prohibiting the publication of local newspapers, independent of the official party organs. The personal factor, however, can barely explain why a party veteran like Gabrovski sided with the Broads. His disagreement was more of a principled, than of a personal nature.

- 21 The argument that the Narrow fraction was losing ground within the party and that the "Broads were well on the road to becoming the dominant fraction by the time of the party's next congress in the summer of 1903" is advanced by Dubowoj, *The schism*, 37.
- 22 Blagoev received his academic education exclusively in the Russian environment, as has already been described in the chapter on intellectuals. Similarly, Sakuzov was educated initially in the Odessa theological seminary, at that time a popular destination for Bulgarian students. It was also the locus where the two first met. However, Sakuzov then departed for Western Europe and in 1881 continued his studies in Germany, further, attended Huxley's lectures in London in 1883 and Taine's in Paris the following year.
- 23 Mitev, *Shirokiiat sotsializim 1892–1900*.
- 24 Despite the fact that Mitev makes use of solid sources, he imposes such an interpretation on them that he does not escape blunt dichotomizations, moralistic evaluations and extreme simplifications. Moreover, he practices a kind of psycho-history, constantly attributing motives which are not evident and cannot be deduced from the source material, to historical actors.
- 25 The adjectives "broad" and "narrow" were initially used with explicit reference to the understanding of Marxist theory. Only later, with the polarization of the polemic, did they come to designate fractions within the party.
- 26 Ibid., 65.
- 27 Ibid., 128ff.
- 28 Sharova, *Paztseplenieto na BRSDP prez 1903 g.*
- 29 V. Topalov, who—quoting D. Kosev—maintains that the relationship of the Bulgarian Marxists to the peasant question "had been wrong from the beginning," advocates a similar position. Topalov also diagnoses a failure to develop an appropriate revolutionary stance towards the countryside, which he correctly attributes to Blagoev's leaning on Plekhanov and not on Lenin. Thus, the Narrows missed the chance to support the democratic and progressive elements of the agrarian movement. "However, their struggle against opportunism on the peasant question was correct, since the opportunists departed from a petty-bourgeois and not a Marxist understanding of the issue, thus bringing corruption to the ranks of the BWSDP." Topalov, "Osnovavane," 202–203. Although the building blocks of the official narrative are conspicuously the same, that is—the failure of the Narrows to come up with the far-sightedness of Lenin—one is at times tempted to see in this critique point precisely an indirect "masked" critique by Bulgarian

scholars on the Narrows. As much as there is a strategy of legitimization in attuning the Bulgarian and the bolshevik narratives, at the same time Leninism could be used as a “respectable” standpoint for “legitimate” criticism. As paradoxical as it may seem, I propose to retain this ambiguity and openness when reading some of the official histories.

- 30 Sharova, *Raztseplenieto*, 45.
- 31 Ibid., 111–115. Apparently there seems to be a preference in drawing parallels between the “opportunistic” struggles in Russia and in Bulgaria. The irony is that Blagoev was making use of Lenin’s literature under the firm impression that “Lenin” stood as a pseudonym for Plekhanov. On this: Rothschild, *The Communist Party*, 30.
- 32 Sharova, *Raztseplenieto*, 150–153.
- 33 Baron, *Plekhanov. The Father of Russian Marxism*, 199.
- 34 Pinkas, *Reformistkata sotsialdemokratsiia v Bŭlgariia*.
- 35 Pinkas reproduces carefully the discourse of the Broads and is cautious with judgments. Considering the general status of the Bulgarian historiography on the schism, Pinkas’ work stands out for its professionalism. Curiously, or rather understandably, Pinkas seems to be simultaneously speaking two different languages, which at times cancel one another out.
- 36 Ibid., 17.
- 37 Ibid., 19 and 44.
- 38 Ibid., 20–23.
- 39 Dubowoj, *The Schism in the Bulgarian Socialist Movement and the Second International*.
- 40 The International Socialist Bureau, located in Brussels, was the permanent executive and information body of the Second International. It was founded after a decision of the Paris Congress of the Second International (1900).
- 41 Dubowoj, 182.
- 42 Ibid., 183.
- 43 The only scholar who has devoted attention to the early period (1880s) is Georgi Borshukov. His two articles on the period are indispensable. See: Borshukov, “Danni za niakoi ranni sotsialisticheski grupi do osnovavaneto na BSDP.” See also his: “Oshte danni za deinost na bŭlgarskite sotsialisti do osnovavaneto na BSDP.”
- 44 Even more detrimental is the identification of any translation and/or quotation of Marx/Engels as a proof of the commitment of intellectuals to Marxism. This cannot be sustained either by their publications and translating activities, or from our experience with other movements at the time. (References to Marx and excerpts from his writings can be found also in the publications of the Serbian Radicals. This does not make them Marxists.) On the publication activities of the Socialists, see: Tsanev, *Izdavaneto na sotsialisticheska kniga prez legalnata period na BKP*.
- 45 The best work on the early intellectual formation of Blagoev is the work of Buzhashki, *D. Blagoev i pobedata na marksizma v bŭlgarskoto sotsialistichsko*

dvizhenie 1885–1903. Buzhashki claims Blagoev to be already a committed Marxist by the time he returned from Russia. His flirtation with populist ideas (as for example in *Savremeni Pokazatel*) he regards as a regression which came about through his return to Bulgaria where he found an ideologically unsophisticated milieu and no fertile ground for Marxism. This can hardly be sustained. Buzhashki's work, although at times ideologically tainted, is rich and thoroughly researched. His book is indisputably a classic on early Bulgarian socialism. For a more accurate treatment of Blagoev's activities in Russia and the ideological horizon of the "Blagoyevtsy" circle, see: Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s*, 131–138. Offord emphasizes the influence of Lassalle on this early "Party of Russian Social Democrats" and the continuation of their relationship with the Narodovoltsy, both ideologically and politically.

- 46 Spiro Gulapchev was indisputably the most prominent socialist figure in Bulgaria in the 1880s. His *Siromakhomilstvo* (Pauperophilia) movement was the first training ground for many intellectuals. Gulapchev's theoretical credo was the outcome of various influences, conspirational revolutionary activity and popular enlightenment from the Russian Populists, the enlightenment ideal of the Liberals, the federative ideas of the Ukrainian nationalist revolutionary Dragomanov. He advocated the amelioration of the fortunes of the people through enlightenment and education. He espoused the, at-times, popular idea in Russia of laboring for "little things" as opposed to the "big tasks." The emphasis was laid on the dissemination of science and the benevolence of charity, with the aim of affecting the material, intellectual and moral development of the people. In the 1880s a whole network of *siromakhomilski druzhini* (pauperophile circles/societies) operated in several Bulgarian cities organized as a conspirative, sectarian organizations. Particularly popular was Chernyshevsky's *What is to be Done?* printed in Gulapchev's printing press. *Siromahomilstvo* functioned as an enlightenment movement of the intelligentsia. On the influence of Gulapchev, see: Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 28–31. There is as yet no monograph on Gulapchev and his movement. Otherwise see: Sharova, "Ideiniiat pŭt na Spiro Gulapchev." Also Genchev, *Profili ot kafene "Landolt,"* 16–25.

- 47 For the best treatment of this subject, see: Buzhashki, *Pobeda*.

- 48 The first party program, conceived in 1891, seems to have been an independent product. Most probably the French and Belgian Party programs were at hand. There is, however, a debate on the extent of their influence. Despite its references to the proletariat, the 1891 program also addressed other social groups and integrated demands specifically related to them. Conspicuous is the presence of the peasantry, while great space is given to the self-government of the communities and the districts. The second party program completed in 1893 shows clear influences of the Erfurt program. It contains a separate section on specific workers' demands (not present in the previous one), while the specific claims for peasants are dropped.

Haupt, Georges, *Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie Südost-Europas, Korrespondenz 1883–1938*, 29–30. Cf. also: *Bŭlgarska Komunisticheska Partia*, vol. 1, 26–31 and 36–40.

- 49 Genchev, *Profili ot kafene "Landolt,"* 109–110.
- 50 Ibid., 114.
- 51 Ibid., 151.
- 52 Bakalov, Georgi, "Die Sozialdemokratische Bewegung in Bulgarien," 597.
- 53 Most probably written by Janko Sakŭzov.
- 54 "Niakolko predvaritelni dumi" (Some preliminary words), *Drugar*, vol. 1, no. 1, 3.9.1893.
- 55 Ibid. (emphasis mine).
- 56 Anon. [possibly Janko Sakŭzov], "Kakva biva borbata na rabotnika" (What should the struggle of the worker be), *Drugar*, vol. 1, no. 7, 15.10.1893 (emphasis mine).
- 57 Anon. [possibly Janko Sakŭzov], "Ot gde proisticha politicheskata borba na rabotnitsite" (The source of the workers' political struggle), *Drugar*, vol. 1, no. 15, 10.12.1893 (emphasis mine).
- 58 Anon. [possibly Janko Sakŭzov], "Paki i paki" (Again and again), *Drugar*, vol. 1, no. 18, 31.12.1893.
- 59 *Zadachata na bŭlgarskata sotsial-demokraticheski sŭiuz* (The task of the Social-Democratic Union), *Den*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1893 (emphasis mine).
- 60 Bolveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 119.
- 61 Blagoev, Dimitŭr, "Shto e sotsializŭm i ima li toi pochva u nas?" in *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 1, 437–532.
- 62 Prokopiev, "Pismo do redaktsiata," *Lŭcha*, no. 3, 1.12.1891, 5–8.
- 63 Blagoev, "Pismo do redaktsiata," *Lŭcha*, no. 6, 15.1.1892, 4–9.
- 64 Blagoev, "Pismo do redaktsiata," *Lŭcha*, no. 7, 1.2.1892, 4–7.
- 65 Prokopiev, "Pismo do redaktsiata," *Lŭcha*, no. 9, 1.3.1892, 4–7.
- 66 Prokopiev, "Kritika i bibliografiia," *Lŭcha*, no. 9, 1.3.1892, 13–16.
- 67 Prokopiev, "Pismo," *Lŭcha*, no. 14, 15.5.1892.
- 68 Prokopiev, "Pismo," *Lŭcha*, no. 15, 1.6.1892.
- 69 Pŭrvanov, "Sotsialdemokratizmŭt i ideinite techeniia," 10.
- 70 Pŭrvanov, "Sotsiademokratizmŭt i ideinite techeniia," 11.
- 71 S. Dikshtein, *Koi na chii gŭrb zhivee*.
- 72 *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, no. 7, 14.10.1897, quoted in Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 136–137.
- 73 Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 136.
- 74 Ibid., 138.
- 75 Protokol na zasedanijata na VIII. kongres na BRSDP, Pleven, 22–28 Juli 1901. *Bŭlgarska komunisticheska partiia*, vol. 2, no. 128, 260 (emphasis mine).
- 76 Buzhashki, *D. Blagoev i pobedata*, 324.
- 77 Gabrovski, *Parlamentarni rechi*, 85–90.
- 78 Sakŭzov, *Kakvo svŭrshiha deputatite tazi godina*.
- 79 Ibid. (emphasis mine).

- 80 Süobshtenie na "Rabotnicheski Vestnik" za rabotata i resheniata na VI. kongres na BRSDP, Gabrovo 12–18 Juli 1899, "Ustna propaganda i agitatsiia," *Bŭlgarska komunisticheska partiia*, vol. 1, no. 256, 47.
- 81 Bakalov, *Otstŭpnichestvo ot sotsializma*, 8.
- 82 Ibid., 20–21.
- 83 Exemplary for the Socialists' attitude towards modernization are the two critical review articles by Gabrovski on opinions expressed by the economic journal *Promishlenost*. Gabrovski claimed that Bulgaria could not exist isolated from other nations, and that its social and economic development was closely related to Western European civilization. On this specific topic, he took the main editor of the journal, Paiakov, to task for his enthusiasm for the patriarchal life of the Bulgarians, the equality in the distribution of the land, etc. Gabrovski was resolute. The patriarchal order proved to be defective in the struggle for the new demands on contemporary societies. It could not accommodate the new forms of productive forces growing within it and consequently had to make way for individualism. Competition and hired labor were the greatest enemies undermining the foundations of patriarchal life. "The popular customs, the family, ownership, law, morality and all other human notions and institutions are constantly changing and no kind of legislation can leave them intact from the influence of new needs and critical thought developing within society. Moreover, as they develop societal customs and traditions, laws and institutions they enter in contradiction with science. Is there any reason to preserve them, just because they are popular/national [*narodni*]?". Furthermore, Gabrovski emphasized the necessity to develop home industry and the inescapable fact of having to go through the same phases of exploitation and monopolies as other Western societies. Gabrovski, Nikola, "*Promishlenost*" *Nauchno-ekonomichesko spisanie v grad Svishtov*, reprinted in *Den*, July/August 1891, no. 7/8, 142–150 and Sept./Oct. 1891, no. 9/10, 300–313.
- 84 Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 1, 437–532.
- 85 The flaws in Blagoev's analysis of the development of capitalism in Bulgaria have been adequately discussed by Alexander Gerschekron. See: "Some Aspects of Industrialization in Bulgaria, 1878–1939" in *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, 198–234. As Gerschekron has rightfully pointed out, "the problem was by no means a merely theoretical one or even one of economic policy. It encompassed the future of socialism in the country." The development of socialism in Bulgaria depended on the speed capitalism would develop. However, there is a point that Gerschekron has overlooked. The significance of Blagoev's essay—despite its evolutionary automated understanding of social processes—represented to a certain extent a broadly accepted vulgarized interpretation of Marxism. Moreover, it had a catalytic impact on the socialist intelligentsia of the times, insofar as it drew a line with previous socialist paradigms and the eclecticism characteristic of the 1880s and properly established Marxism as a paradigm.
- 86 Gabrovski, *Parlamentski rechi*, 11–19.

87 Ibid., 15ff. (emphasis mine).

88 The dilemma was expressed quite pointedly by one of the major representatives of Russian populism, Mikhailovski: "All this 'maiming of women and children' we have still before us, and from the point of view of Marx's historical theory, we should not protest against them because it would mean acting to our own detriment; on the contrary we should welcome them as the steep but necessary steps to the temple of happiness. It would be, indeed, very difficult to bear this inner contradiction, this conflict between theory and values which in many concrete situations would inevitably tear the soul of a Russian disciple of Marx. He must reduce himself to the role of an onlooker, who, with the dispassionate equanimity of a Pimen, writes in the annals of the two-edged progress. He cannot, however, take an active part in this process. He is morally unable to push forward the wicked side of the process and, on the other hand, he believes that activity motivated by his moral feelings would only contribute to making the whole process longer and slower. His ideal, if he is really a disciple of Marx, consists, among other things, in making property inseparable from labor, so that the land, the tools and all the means of production belong to the workers. On the other hand, if he really shares Marx's historico-philosophical views, he should be pleased to see the producers being divorced from the means of production, he should treat this divorce as the first phase of the inevitable and, in the final result, beneficial process. He must, in a word, accept the overthrowing of the principles inherent in his ideal. This collision between moral feeling and historical inevitability should be resolved, of course, in favor of the latter." As quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 146.

89 It is significant to notice the different function of the institution of the state between the "classical" Western experience (e.g., England, France) and the new created Balkan states. The crucial difference is temporality. The creation of bureaucratic "nation" states in Western Europe dates from the modern period and contrasts to the novelty of the experience in the Balkans. Social transformation in the West was a complex phenomenon of the creation of new social forces (the rise of new classes), coupled with technological innovation, overseas expansion, etc. These new social elites pushed the state and the monarchy into making concessions. In the Balkans it is almost the reverse. The state functioned as a privileged public domain for the creation of elites.

90 Le Goff, "Eine Mehrdeutige Geschichte" in Raulff, ed., *Mentalitäten-Geschichte*, 23.

91 Production for the Ottoman market and army was supplemented with the Ottoman reform decree of 1839, which gave Bulgarian merchants the formal right to trade freely throughout the empire. According to John Lampe: "By the 1870s, this expanding commercial network supported a dozen towns with populations over 5,000 and a labor force of perhaps 100,000 upland artisans, nearly 10 per cent of the active labour in the Bulgarian

- lands ... What happened, in brief, was the spread of monetisation (the money–goods relationship in Marx’s terms) and the creation of a broad base of commercial experience in the Bulgarian lands. The profits and travel of successful artisan owners and traders encouraged them to pay for building local schools and for the further education of their sons outside the Ottoman Empire, in Russia or the German lands. Eventually however, this large sector of small-scale, unmechanized manufacture would create a barrier to the introduction of modern factory production that endured into the inter-war period.” Lampe, *The Bulgarian Economy in the Twentieth Century*, 22.
- 92 Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 116 (emphasis mine).
- 93 Ibid., 118.
- 94 Gabrovski, *Koi sa narodni razoriteli?* 29 (emphasis mine).
- 95 Blagoev confirms that the party was publicly heralded not as the “social democratic party,” but as the “workers’ party,” “the poor peoples’ party,” “the party of the poor and suppressed.” See: Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata*, 358.
- 96 Gabrovski, *Parlamentski rechi*, 104–109.
- 97 Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*, 117 (emphasis mine).
- 98 Sakŭzov, *Nalezhashtite reformi*, 24–25 (emphasis mine).
- 99 Populism here understood as a sociological category.
- 100 The agrarian issue within the German and international Social Democracy is treated extensively in: Lehmann, *Die Agrarfrage in der Theorie und Praxis der Deutschen und internationalen Sozialdemokratie*.
- 101 Buzhashki, *Pobedata*, 283.
- 102 Gabrovski was invited to “voluntarily” cease his publication in the V. congress of the BWSDP in Jambol (12–17 July 1898). It was maintained that his publication was, on the one hand, addressing strata already addressed by the party’s official organs, making thus his publication superfluous, while, on the other, that it also appealed to strata “foreign” to the party’s true milieu. Blagoev invited Gabrovski to give up his publication before any official congress decision was taken against it. Thus Gabrovski (according to Blagoev) would allow the party’s opponents “to understand what kind of discipline rules in our party.” Gabrovski consented to self-censorship. The 5th Party Congress nevertheless, took also an official decision prohibiting the party members from publishing newspapers on their own initiative, and allowing only for the publication of magazines, conditional again on party consent. It was this decision that was revived in the later debate around *Obshto Delo* in 1900. See: *Iz vlechenie ot protokola na V. kongres na BRSDP, Jambol 12–17 Juli 1898. Bŭlgarska komunisticheska partiia*, vol. 1, no. 235, 434–438.
- 103 Buzhashki, *Pobedata*, 286–290.
- 104 Ibid., 291.
- 105 On the case Bakalov, with a special emphasis on the issue of the press, see: Konstantinova, *Buntŭt na “Anarkholiberalite.”*

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- 106 Blagoev, "Selskiiat vŭpros" (The Peasant question) in *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 3, 424–428. See also: "Sotsializmŭt i rabotniceskiiat vŭpros v Bŭlgaria" (Socialism and the workers' question in Bulgaria), Plovdiv, 1900. It would be a futile exercise to bring further evidence of Blagoev's "inevitable scenario" of capitalistic development. It is a motif literally repeated in all his writings.
- 107 Bogdanović, "Srpska socijaldemokratska partija i seljaštvo," 105–124. Bogdanović's conclusion is quite telling: "In a few words, when the Serbian Social Democrats were realistic, they ceased to be social democrats, and when they were social democrats, they were unrealistic." (123) It is furthermore interesting to observe the lack of response in the urban milieu. Despite the fact that the Serbian Social Democrats put major efforts into attracting the urban working population, their electoral results were not only unstable, but also negligent. In 1903 the SSDP received 1,719 urban votes, in 1905 2,571, in 1906 3,381, in 1908 3,034 and in 1912 3,814. Considering the fact that the SSDP in 1903 set up candidates in 11 cities and in 1912 in 21, it is apparent that the electoral support of the Socialists did not rise within 10 years. (119) For a detailed account of the Serbian Social Democrats' attitude towards the countryside and the debates within the SSDP on the agrarian question, see: Milentijević, *A History of the Serbian Social Democratic Party*, 295–334.
- 108 Milentijević, *A History*, 330–331.
- 109 Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata*, 352–353 (emphasis mine).
- 110 Gabrovski, "Selenite i sotsializŭm" I and II, *Rabotnik*, vol. II, nos. 15 and 16, 5.2.1894 and 12.2.1894.
- 111 Gabrovski, *Parlamentarni rechi*.
- 112 Ibid., *Po zakona za lihoimstvoto*, 83–94.
- 113 Ibid., *Po zakona za zastrahuvanie na zemnite proizvedeniia ot gradobitnina*, 94–99.
- 114 Gabrovski, *Koi sa narodni razoriteli?* 12.
- 115 Ibid., 13–18.
- 116 Gabrovski left no illusions to parliamentary deputies who considered the peasant unrest to be simply the work of peace-loathing instigators: "The peasant movement is not an artificially created movement. If it were the result of temporary, partisan agitation, I assure you, you would have been capable to suppress and strangle it. It would suffice to arrest its leaders, bring them to court and the peasants would return to their homes and would not even think of continuing their struggle. This is how artificial movements come to an end: through the elimination of the initiators, the movement itself extinguishes. However, the movements that draw their strength, their energy from the endless pains and plights of the people, in the injustices, arbitrariness and violence of rulers, these popular movements, which are the expression of the working and exploited people striving towards a democratic order, towards a better government, these kind of movements, cannot be suppressed, strangled through violence ...

- When you attempt to choke, to trample on the popular movement in one place, it will explode with greater force in other [places], until it engulfs the whole country. This is the nature of popular movements in history and we should have no illusions when we discuss them. The agrarian movement has deep local causes. These being the general condition of agricultural production, which in its current form barely allows [the peasant] to keep his head above water, not to mention receive justice, and on the other hand, in the destructive and ruinous politics of the courtier governments in Bulgaria.” Gabrovski, *Dvortsovite rezhimi v Bŭlgaria*, 9–10.
- 117 Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata*, 352.
- 118 On the populist influences on the early agrarian movement, see: Bell, *Peasants in Power*, 18–20. The fact that the Agrarian Union was created initially as a nonpolitical, “educational-economic” organization testifies to the influence of populist ideas in the agrarian movement.
- 119 Ibid., 37.
- 120 Topalov, Vladislav, “Osnovavane na bŭlgarskii zemedelski sŭiuz,” 171–172.
- 121 Quoted in: Ibid., 176.
- 122 Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*, 24.
- 123 Bell, *Peasants in Power*, 64.
- 124 Ibid., 67.
- 125 Ibid., 60–73.
- 126 Ibid., 69–70.
- 127 Ibid., 110.
- 128 Petrov, *Zemedelskiiat kooperativizŭm v Bŭlgarija*, 82–83.
- 129 Ibid., 112–114.
- 130 See: Kautsky’s introduction to the Bulgarian version of the *Agrarfrage* published in 1899. Quoted in: Haupt, Georges, ed. *Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie*, 615–617.
- 131 Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata*, 368–370.
- 132 Bakalov, *Otsŭŭpnichestvo*, 6 ff.
- 133 Buzhashki, *Pobedata*, 293.
- 134 “Polozhenieto” (The situation), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 1, 18.9.1900.
- 135 “Ekonomicheskoto polozhenie” (The economic situation), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1.10.1900.
- 136 “Kŭm kogo da se obŭrnem?” (To whom should we turn?), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1.11.1900.
- 137 The same argument is advanced with respect to the industrialization of Bulgaria by Alexander Gershekron, see: “Some Aspects of Industrialization in Bulgaria, 1878–1939,” in Gershekron, *Economic Backwardness*, 198–234.
- 138 “Mŭchnotiite na vŭzrazhdaneto” (The calamities of the revival), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 5, 15.11.1900. The same argument is advanced also in “Reaktsiata i neiinite predstaviteli” (Reaction and its representatives), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 14, 1.4.1901.

- 139 "Narodnite nuzhdi i partiite" (Popular needs and the parties), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 8, 5.1.1901
- 140 "Glavnite zadachi" (The main tasks), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 12, 5.3.1901.
- 141 "Bŭlgarskata demokratsiia" (Bulgarian democracy), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 16, 1.5.1901.
- 142 "Sotsialnata demokratsiia" (Social democracy), *Obshto Delo*, vol. 1, no. 20, 7.7.1901.
- 143 Bakalov, Georgi, "Ekonomicheska i politicheska borba" (Economic and political struggle), *Den*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1893.
- 144 Janko Sakŭzov on Karl Kautsky 12.2.1899, in Haupt, Georges, ed., *Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie Südost-Europas*, 87.
- 145 Blagoev, "Sotsializŭm ili demokratizŭm" (Socialism or democratism) in *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 6, 633.
- 146 In 1913 the greatest part of the land (about 30 percent), was in the hands of a thin layer of big landowners, constituting approximately 4,000 people. Around 1 million peasant households (95 percent of the owners) had to content itself with 55 percent of the arable land. The abolition of serfdom in 1864 did not ameliorate the lot of the peasant as expected. The reform—as in Russia—was not particularly successful and for several reasons small ownership did not manage to guarantee the peasant's subsistence. Romania was to be perpetually convulsed by violent peasant riots, the most serious one being in 1907, which cost the lives of 11,000 peasants.
- 147 Schmidt, *Populismus oder Marxismus*, 83–91.
- 148 Constantin Stere descended from a family of the lower Bessarabian aristocracy. He participated in *Narodna Volja* and was arrested in 1884. He spent some time in a prison in Odessa and was later transferred to Siberia. Upon his release he returned to Romania, where he was to become a major critic of materialistic philosophy. Under the influence of neo-Kantianism, Stere argued that it was consciousness that determined being and not the other way around. Dialectics, according to Stere, belonged to the realm of metaphysics. The Marxists, in the name of class struggle—an alleged natural social law—were willing to sacrifice the interests of the contemporaries on the altar of posterity. The highest principles were consciousness and ethics. If philosophy had not fulfilled its tasks, it was primarily for two reasons. Firstly, because of the erroneous belief that human destiny was determined by supranatural forces and, secondly, because of the tendency to extrapolate ethics upon nature on the assumption that a "natural life" is, a priori, a moral one. *Ibid.*, 95–100.
- 149 *Ibid.*, 83–121.
- 150 Bakalov, *Ostŭpnichestvo ot sotsializma*, 36–37 (emphasis mine).
- 151 On Plekhanov's intellectual formation, see: Baron, *Plekhanov. The Father of Russian Marxism*.
- 152 Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 416.

- 153 Ibid., 417.
- 154 Blagoev, "Pro domo sua" in *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 6, 430–431.
- 155 Blagoev, "Novoto polozhenie" (The new situation) in *Sŭchineniia*, vol. 6, 529–531. This was of course no new argument for Blagoev. Considering the possibilities of materializing democracy in Bulgaria, as they were discussed broadly in the 1890s, Blagoev claimed that even the best written constitution is nothing more than fiction when there were no social forces that could act as the carriers of democracy in a society. A constitution in reality expressed the correlation of social forces. Buzhashki, *Pobedata*, 293. How it had been possible that Bulgaria received an exceptionally progressive constitution immediately after its liberation, and which were the social forces that had carried it through, did not seem exactly to have crossed his mind. Nor did he seem willing to contemplate the fact that neighboring countries like Greece and Romania had "functioning" constitutional systems and why.
- 156 Blagoev, "Sotsializŭm ili demokratizŭm," 532–537.
- 157 Blagoev, "Pro domo sua," 438–442.
- 158 Blagoev, "Sotsializŭm ili demokratizŭm," 621–625.
- 159 Ibid., 613.
- 160 Bakalov, *Otstŭpnichestvo*, 22.
- 161 Bakalov, *Otstŭpnichestvo*, 27 (emphasis mine).
- 162 Ibid., 24–25 (emphasis mine).
- 163 Ibid., 26.
- 164 Ibid., 28.
- 165 Ibid., 41–42.
- 166 Ibid., 46 (emphasis mine).
- 167 Sakŭzov, *Trevoga za prizratsi*.
- 168 Ibid., 42.
- 169 See: Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Max Versus Friedrich List*.
- 170 Sakŭzov, *Trevoga za prizratsi*, 53.
- 171 Ibid., 59.
- 172 Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 107. See also: 172–173.
- 173 Sakŭzov, *Trevoga za prizratsi*, 61.
- 174 Ibid., 61–62.
- 175 Ibid., 75 (emphasis mine).
- 176 Ibid., 75–76 (emphasis mine).
- 177 Ibid., 75.
- 178 Ibid., 43–44 (emphasis mine).
- 179 Ibid., 52.
- 180 Ibid., 52 (emphasis mine).
- 181 Ibid., 92ff. (emphasis mine).
- 182 Dzhidrov, *Printsiipi i zabluzhdeniia v bŭlgarskata sotsial-demokraticheska partiia*.
- 183 Ibid., 25.

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- 184 Ibid., 35.
185 Ibid., 38–39.
186 Ibid., 40.
187 Ibid., 46–47 (emphasis mine).
188 Sakūzov's speech was an answer to the royal address to the extraordinary session of the 12th National Assembly and is reprinted as *Nalezhashtite reformi* (The urgent reforms).
189 Ibid., 23–24 (emphasis mine).
190 According to Armando Pitassio, the ownership issue was a major barrier in the negotiations between the Narrows and the Agrarians in the short-lived, but significant, Radomir Republic in 1918. See: Pitassio, "La Socialdemocrazia bulgara e la questione agraria," 35.
191 *Printsipi i zabluzhdeniia*, 75.
192 Ibid., 82.
193 Blagoev, *Prinos kŭm istoriata*, 441–443. Apparently in Sofia, which had the biggest organization in the country, workers from the guilds and independent crafts opposed the efforts of intellectuals to lead the organization. Disputes of a similar kind between intellectuals and workers erupted also in Pleven.
194 Dimitrov, *Razpra v rabotnicheskata partiia*, 27 (emphasis mine).
195 Ibid., 28.
196 Ibid., 29–30.
197 Ibid., 30.
198 Ibid., 30.
199 Ibid., 32 (Emphasis mine).
200 Bell, *Peasants in Power*, 101–102.
201 Dimitrov, *Razpra v rabotnicheskata partiia*, 58.
202 Sakūzov, "Ursprung, Wesen und Grenzen der Theorie," 624–628.
203 Ibid., 626 (emphasis mine).
204 Ibid., 627 (emphasis mine).
205 Here a clarification is necessary. What might seem self-evident in our contemporary understanding of social democracy, that is the existence of reformatory social-democratic parties which functioned simultaneously as promoters and controllers of capitalism (the profile of most contemporary Western social-democratic parties), was not at all self-evident in the period of imminent revolution.
206 See: Bernstein, Eduard, *The Preconditions of Socialism*; Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2, 98–114.
207 For a discussion of neo-Kantianism and its fusion with socialism, particularly as expressed in the case of Austro-Marxism, see: Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2, 247–251.
208 Bell, *Peasants in Power*, 65.
209 Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, vol. 2, 78–87.
210 Dimitrov, *Burzhoaznata opozitsiia v Bŭlgaria 1939–1944*, 213.
211 Ibid., 239.

- 212 The argument about the primacy of the need to achieve international recognition for the prince is advanced also by Sakūzov. See: Sakūzov, *Lichniiat regime*, 17.
- 213 Sakāzov, *Tsesarism ili demokratiia*, 89–91.
- 214 The term *poporanism* was coined by Constantin Stere himself from the Romanian word for people (*popor*). Stere's ideological concoction was based on an amalgamation of the thought of the Russian Legal Populists (Voroncov, Daniel'son and Mikhailovski), a populist reading of Marx and Engels, aspects of Bernstein's revisionist critic as well as neo-Kantianism. He refuted the thesis that a predominantly agrarian country like Romania would experience industrialization and capitalistic development according to the Western European model. Romanian backwardness was not a temporal but structural problem and contended that Romania would remain an agrarian country. Moreover, class struggle was absent in agrarian societies due to the lack of differentiation of the means of production. He suggested the expropriation of big landownership and the creation of collective village lease-cooperatives (*obștii sătești*). The key to growth lay in the transformation of the agrarian sector and the increase of productivity. See: Schmidt, *Populismus oder Marxismus*, 172–183; Müller, *Agrarpopulismus in Rumänien*, 27–37.
- 215 Müller, *Agrarpopulismus in Rumänien*, 36.

V. MODERNITY WITHOUT SOCIALISM

It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link.

V. I. Lenin

There are few aspects of my administration that make me so proud as my labor legislation.

I am rather a leftist.

Eleftherios Venizelos

Admittedly, it is not wise to start a chapter with a pompous title. It does summarize, however, most concisely the principal argument of the Greek case study with respect to the two preceding ones on Serbia and Bulgaria. Nor is it wiser to start by juxtaposing the quotations of two contemporaries who had little to do with each other, not to mention their adherence to entirely opposite ideological camps. The first belongs to the most favorite repertoire of the Greek Communists from 1926 to 1927, used abundantly in their debates on their desperate attempts to find that missing link that would connect them to the masses. Ironically, as history can often be, it was not the Greek Communists, but Eleftherios Venizelos, the leader of the Greek Liberal Party, who seemed to grasp and appreciate best Lenin's practical advice. He not only proved his skills in tactical maneuvering, but retained also—with limited interruptions—the prerogative of action on the entangled chessboard of inter-war politics. Two modernizing projects thus encountered each other, aiming at diametrically opposite goals and guided by thoroughly different social visions, but with comparable hegemonic pretensions: Venizelos' Bismarckian vision of etatist modernization and the

Communists' Bolshevik vision of a future society. As power projects, or as ideal types, both endeavored to capture and instrumentalize the state as the prime motor of modernization, and both desired to mold and engineer society from above. In the quest for hegemony, it was undeniably Venizelos, who—to put it in Gramsci's terms—won “the war of position.” Whereas the Communist Party of Greece (*Kommounistiko Komma Elladas*, KKE) reckoned politics to be a battle of principles, Venizelos deemed politics an exercise in political agility.

This section deals with the fortunes of socialism and its successor ideology, communism, in Greece. The Greek case is distinctive in a variety of ways. In the first place, socialism was politically institutionalized with a great temporal discrepancy, not only in comparison to the country's northern neighbors, but also with reference to the more generic international experience. The Greek social-democratic party was founded only in 1918, while equivalent parties had been formed in Bulgaria in 1891, in Romania in 1893 and 1910 and in Serbia in 1903. Socialism remained a marginal ideological option in the Greek political landscape not only in the nineteenth, but well into the twentieth century, acquiring political weight only towards the end of the 1930s. This circumstance is even more intriguing in the light of the fact that Greek scholars of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries had pioneered in the dissemination of the legacy of the Enlightenment—the ideological matrix of socialism—in the Balkans. The Greek Enlightenment had had a significant impact in the Bulgarian lands, the urban centers of the Asia Minor littoral and Romania as well. Despite the fact that socialist ideas started penetrating Old Greece, as most areas of the Balkan Peninsula by the 1870s, socialism did not become an organized political force there until the second decade of the twentieth century. Characteristically, in the countries examined above, the founding of socialist parties was the result of the concerted efforts of intellectuals and preceded the systematic organization of the working class. More pointedly, social-democratic discourses had, *de facto*, constructed the social subject before the subject had “properly” come into being, as we have witnessed in the Bulgarian case. Quite the opposite was the case in Greece, where a rudimentary labor movement was well on its way before a social-democratic party even emerged.

An additional contrast lies in the fact that in both preceding cases, socialism received its entry ticket to the public sphere with an emphasis

on the political, rather than on the social factor. To the degree that it touched upon the social, it was destined to have an echo rather upon the agrarian and small-producer milieu than the embryonic working class. In all three countries (Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania) socialism *de facto* became entangled one way or another with some form of rudimentary agrarianism/populism. The Serbian Radicals engulfed and absorbed the early grass-roots agrarian movement, while the Bulgarian Social Democrats, before being challenged by the agrarian movement, commanded a flexible political space that partially included the countryside. The Bulgarians' socialist/populist discourse on poverty and justice seemed to strike a cord with the peasants' disenchantment with the state, and, as we have already witnessed, the rise of the agrarian movement provided the ignition for the formulation of the Broads' socialist dissent. Furthermore, despite ambiguities and contradictions, socialism entered both countries as a theory related to the broader project of modernity and became involved in the debates over the course of the modernization process.

The fate of socialism is comparable to the fate of agrarianism in Greece, another political latecomer in the Greek political landscape. Agrarian parties made their debut in Greece as late as the inter-war period. In the 1920s, agrarianism loomed big in a large part of the peninsula. The Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) in Bulgaria, the National Peasant Party (PNTȚ) in Romania and the Croatian Peasant Party (HŠS) were serious political actors. While agrarianism did not become in Romania and Croatia the hegemonic political force it was in Bulgaria, it posed a most serious and challenging opposition nevertheless. The spectacular rise of agrarianism in the inter-war period reflected partially general trends in Eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia) and Southeastern Europe, while also feeding on strong local causes. On the one hand, it was the result of the watershed of the First World War and was understood as an alternative answer to the pressing problem of modernization, and on the other, it reflected the dynamic of local political developments. The rise of the BANU cannot be understood independently of the failure of liberalism in the pre-First World War period, sealed by two major military defeats that brought the pre-war political system to its knees and signaled a major and unambiguous swing to the left. In Croatia, the Peasant Party represented an admixture of modernization and nationalism, as it developed into the most articulate mouth-

piece of the Croatian national cause and posed the most serious resistance to Belgrade centralism. Both in Greece and Serbia—for different reasons—agrarianism remained marginal altogether. Attempts to found a pure agrarian party in pre-war Serbia were crowned with failure, as the history of the short-lived Serbian National Peasant Union (*Srpska Narodna Seljačka Sloga*) demonstrates. Founded in 1903, the party slowly withered away, further testimony of the uncontested authority of the Radicals over the Serbian peasantry. In Greece, agrarianism represented a new factor in the inter-war political scene. The anemic agrarian parties created in this period were inspired by current models like the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union and reflected not only the north-south cleavage between the “New Lands” in the north and Old Greece, but resonated also certain initial fissures in the well-entrenched bipolar political constellation of the inter-war period. Generically speaking, despite pressing problems and occasional explosions, agrarianism in Greece remained a negligible factor until and including the 1910s, while in the inter-war period it remained politically and geographically peripheral, being more influential in the northern part of the country.

In fact, the inter-war period was a chemical laboratory for socialism and agrarianism alike. Their fermentation, however, was to bare proper fruit only in the late 1940s, which witnessed also their cross-fertilization into a powerful popular movement as manifested by the National Liberation Front (EAM). The resistance movement of the 1940s inherited the social baggage of the two preceding decades and properly fed on the social processes that were initiated, but remained entrenched, in the political polarization of the inter-war period. The resistance movement was a catalytic new experience of mass dimensions, and in that respect, it represented a deep caesura with the hitherto established political practice in Greece. Indeed, with historical retrospection, it may be argued that the 1940s represent a major turning point in the broader gamut of Modern Greek history.

The question may be legitimately raised whether this conspicuous delay of organized and articulate social movements in Greece, like the belated politicization of both socialism and agrarianism, represents simply a time lap in historical development. To put it in simpler terms: that which in neighboring countries appeared earlier, simply appeared later in Greece, with the approximate time delay of a century (ca. 1830–1930). The above observation must be subjected to discus-

sion. Despite common structural characteristics in socio-economic development, it is certain that far from ever assuming a unilinear development for all Balkan countries, country-specific political formations, intellectual influences, state structures, the texture and content of national imaginary, the technologies of mass political integration, political systems, regional cleavages, etc., which will also be partially discussed in this chapter, provide some of the most significant parameters that largely determined the rise or the dynamic of specific social and political movements. All these factors need to be analyzed as much from the standpoint of the individual local contexts, as from an inter-Balkan comparative perspective.

The fate of the left in inter-war Greece contrasts significantly also with the development in neighboring countries. Not only were there social-democratic parties founded much earlier, but their respective communist parties were more or less outlawed by the early 1920s (Yugoslavia 1921, Bulgaria 1923, Romania 1924), while the KKE was outlawed only in 1936. Admittedly, there was repression and intimidation; the practice of exile and prosecution was quite common, while the state developed legal repressive mechanisms early enough in order to curb the activities of “dangerous elements,” syndicalists and communist leaders alike, as demonstrated by the passing of the restrictive *Idionymon* law in 1929.¹ But the discrepancy in the dates gives a sense of the degree to which the Greek bourgeois establishment considered the Communists a “real” threat to its hegemony and the *status quo*. After the collapse of the mightiest grand narrative of the Greek State, the *Megali Idea* or Great Idea in 1922, anti-communism proved to be a handy ideological substitute and was elevated to the status of state ideology, a legitimizing instrument for the enhanced authoritarian practices of the state. But appearances can be misleading. It was not the reaction of an establishment under threat. In the realm of social history, the Greek case is characterized by a further paradox. Despite the fact that inter-war Greece possessed the numerically largest working class contingent of the three cases under analysis,² socialism and subsequently communism remained comparatively feeble. Power seemed to be running loose on the streets in the inter-war period. Unprecedented mass mobilizations and strike activities were the order of the day, and yet the Communists seemed unable to pick up and canalize this enormous social energy. This chapter will also attempt to address the reasons for this failure.

The creation of a social-democratic party in Greece (1918) coincided with the eve of one of the most turbulent periods in the political history of the country. A series of consequent wars (Balkan Wars, First World War and the Asia Minor Campaign) changed not only the geographic, but also the demographic profile of the country. 1922 marked not only the death sentence of the Greek irredentist vision, driven by the imaginary of a country spanning into "two continents" and surrounded by "five seas," but saw also the influx into Greece of over 1,200,000 refugees, representing a *de facto* decimation of the Greek Diaspora communities of the Eastern Mediterranean, the "alter ego" of the Greek Kingdom ever since the nineteenth century. Dramatic events like the National Schism, the departure and return of the monarch, the Asia Minor catastrophe, the execution of the six, the mass influx of refugees, the proclamation of the republic, and the renewed restoration of the monarchy, provided a tense, polarized and simultaneously fluid political landscape. In contrast to Yugoslavia, where inter-war politics were dominated by intense ethnic strife at least until 1929, and to Bulgaria, where after 1923 the political landscape was polarized along the lines of a ruling Right and an oppositional Left, in Greece the political field was dominated by an idiosyncratic form of "civil war," commonly referred to as the "National Schism." In concrete political terms it signified the alternation of two hegemonic antagonistic multi-party blocks, the Venizelists and Anti-Venizelists, in power. The National Schism constituted the formative context for the dominant political cleavage in Greek inter-war politics. And moreover, it was the principal reason, as will be argued later, that allowed for the deformation of the social factor, and the subordination of the social by the political. The imbroglio of inter-war politics was complicated further by regular military intervention. Of course military interventions were not an utterly new factor in Greek politics. The army had made its debut already in 1909, while the militarization of politics was in tune with more generic developments in inter-war Europe. From the early 1920s onwards, the initiative of action slid progressively from the hands of the civilian world into the hands of the increasingly politicized military. If initially the military was meant to be an obedient ally of politicians, it soon toppled the scale in its own favor, making a hostage of the political world, a process that culminated in the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936.

In the international socialist arena, the realization of the October Revolution signaled an irrevocable split and a change in the dominant paradigm of the socialist movement as it caught sympathizers by surprise and filled foes with apprehension. Most significantly, it opened wide the horizon of expectations towards the attainment of that which, until then, had been considered a goal of the distant future, a future that, moreover, no socialist theoretician had ever seriously pondered upon with respect to its concrete prospective shape. The attainment of socialism had always represented the end goal, but what socialist society would actually look like had never been more than an exercise in imagination. These premises were to radically change after the creation of the Soviet state. It was as if in a strange surreal manner the temporal sequence of the world had been reversed as the future was brought suddenly into the present in a new apocalyptic time. From that moment onwards nothing seemed impossible anymore. Following the example of the Bolsheviks, the broadly accepted and practiced evolutionary road to socialism was replaced by revolutionary voluntarism. And whereas the Second International had been a loose association of national sections, the Third was to be—at least theoretically—a world party of Communists to lead and organize world revolution. The Greek social-democratic party, the SEKE (the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece), was born right in that vacuum between the end of the Second and the birth of the Third International, which stands also as symbolic for the dramatic oscillations between the “left” and the “right” that the KKE would later experience. The Greek Socialists turned Communist and subsequently fixed their gaze on this new future-present—which was to be constantly present. They missed, however, one thing: their past. When they—with the most sincere intentions—tried to take up both the tasks of their missing past and their demanding present, seeking to locate themselves politically in the moving ice of the inter-war period, they could not have realized that Venizelos had been there before them.

The chapter is organized thematically, like the two preceding ones, but follows, more or less, linear chronological criteria. The first section discusses the fate of socialism as an intellectual movement from approximately the 1870s until the creation of the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece in 1918. The reading of this early phase of socialism in Greece proceeds mainly against the background of the existing histo-

riographical options. The emphasis here is less on the descriptive level, that is, on a linear syntactic reconstruction of already known facts on the history of early socialism in Greece; rather, the stress is placed on the analytical and hermeneutical level, in an attempt to evaluate the proportions and the dynamic of early socialism and to consequently explain its weakness as a political alternative in Greece. The second section deals with the fate of the KKE in the inter-war period. Also this part engages in a dialogue with Greek historiography, wishing to provide a tentative answer as to the inability of the Communists to develop into a considerable political factor and, moreover, to illuminate the reasons that invalidated their discourse in the inter-war period. This section does not cover the theoretical production that appeared in the late 1920s and 1930s, of a very sophisticated generation of Greek communist intellectuals. Rising initially through the ranks of the KKE, they were the driving motor of its bolshevization process and would achieve their actual theoretical acumen outside of its ranks as part of the alternative, predominantly Trotskyist, left.

1. Historiographical Notes

Historiography is the self-reflexive story of history. It goes without saying that the seminal experience that shaped the historiographies on socialism, and the modality of their representation in the three countries under analysis, was the post-1945 political order. Political exigencies logically conditioned the retrospective reading of the history of socialism. Whereas in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria socialism was established as a “real” political system, in Greece the “eminent” period of the left, that being the resistance movement, was clouded not only by a traumatic civil war, but also by a final defeat that determined post-1949 political developments. Moreover, the left, due to the conservative post-Second World War political establishment, was denied both political and national “citizenship.” Whereas in the first two countries, despite systemic differences in applied socialism, there was a need for the legitimization of the newly created order, a circumstance manifested in the construction of linear narratives of continuity, logically leading to an explication of the status quo, in Greece, the left could claim only the role of an “honorable,” but defeated “outsider.” While in the one case, it was “victory,” in the other, it was “defeat” that determined the trope of narration.

In contrast again to the experience of the left in Western Europe, in which Greece was officially taxinomized due to Cold War arrangements, the immediate post-Second World War period was not characterized by a return to “normality,” but by the burden of an additional fratricidal experience with long-lasting consequences. The setting, thus, for the Greek left and consequently for its historiographical inquiries was, given the circumstances, dramatic, not to say tragic, comparable rather to the Spanish experience. In Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, communist parties maintained the monopoly of historical narration, despite modifications in the narratives (in Yugoslavia, for example, after the break with the Soviet Union in 1948), whereas in Greece, the leftist legacy could not be appropriated by one single source, not even the Communist Party, and became the apple of discord of competing official and unofficial leftisms, particularly after 1968 and the official

split in the KKE. Whereas Marxist analysis was the only one available, and due to surplus use became a discredited, analytical tool in previous communist countries, in Greece Marxism was the chosen option of most sophisticated academics and not only intelligentsia. This circumstance goes also to explain predictable differences in the various Marxist narratives. While, for example, economic historians in Bulgaria (e.g., Jacques Natan) and Yugoslavia (e.g., Nikola Vučo) were eager to demonstrate the development of a rampant capitalism, which led teleologically to the establishment of socialism, Greek Marxist scholars (e.g., Konstantinos Tsoukalas) would stress the distorted character of capitalistic development in the European periphery. An alternative Marxist analysis, external to the KKE, made its headway in Greece in the 1970s and followed logically in the footsteps of Western Marxist paradigms, particularly the French school. With respect to the history of the KKE and its legacy, the principal evaluations reflect to a certain extent—and how could it be otherwise—political allegiance. Whereas for example the official KKE narrative has been broadly attuned to the Soviet exegetical grand narrative, various “alternative” leftist narratives of diverse colors have seriously contested its evaluations. So, for example, the eradication of dissent as part of the Stalinization process, considered a righteous victory of the orthodox line in official party narratives, is heavily contested by the alternative interpretations. A depoliticization of the history of socialism as an exclusively inter-leftist affair is, however, progressively gaining ground.

A lineage of continuity is the backbone of every grand narrative and, for this reason, a structurally indispensable element of every congruent, or seemingly congruent, story. The history of the early period of socialism in Greece (1870–1918), that is before the institutionalization of the SEKE, is not an exception to this rule. Historiographical controversy affects predominantly later periods, that is the inter-war period and, more heavily, the resistance movement and the civil war.³ There is consequently less at stake in the treatment of the early period, which is examined predominantly from the standpoint of the history of ideas,⁴ since before 1918 there was a lack of an organized and coherent institutional structure. The intellectual history approach has promoted an encyclopedic viewpoint in the research of the history of socialism in Greece, accountable not only for setting the canon, but also for encouraging the narrative of continuity, characteristic in the

treatment of the early socialist period. Despite its indisputable and innumerable merits, it has contributed also in perpetuating the distorted image of the early period, depicting the history of socialism in Greece as an unbroken, continuous and coherent process. The history of early socialism in Greece is treated descriptively as an additive story, but is done so with no reference to any quantitative or qualitative standards and, perhaps, with an intentional negligence to apply any comparative and standardized criteria. The end result is a very indigenous story of socialism. Socialism gains a depth in time it never really possessed, is treated in isolation from its *zeitgeist*, and its significance is inflated out of proportion to the historical context to which it pertained. The objections raised derive from the conviction that every endeavor to tell a story cannot be reduced to an elementary reconstruction of the “factology” of history, but is simultaneously an attempt to give a sense of the proportions of the story. The encyclopedic, “patchwork” narrative of Greek socialism consequently fails to address issues like the weakness of socialism as a political alternative, the belated institutionalization of a social-democratic party, the relationship between socialist ideology and the working-class movement, the degree of local “digestion” of international paradigms, etc. Moreover, the disproportionate and euphemistic representation of the early period has an unintentional, yet misleading, effect on evaluations proposed for later periods of the socialist movement.

Quite indicative of this genre of disproportionate narration is the chronology applied to the Greek socialist movement. Whereas in most socialist narratives the foundation of socialist parties is considered the prime indicator of a structural change in their respective socialist movements, delimitating what went before (early, utopian, etc.) from what followed, in Greece the early period is delimited by the year 1907, that is, not when the socialist party was founded, but the year of the publication of Georgios Sklēros’ book *Our Social Issue*, considered to be the first Marxist analysis of Greek society. Despite the fact that, for example, Blagoev’s *Shto e sotsializŭm* (1891) is also considered a landmark in the chronology of socialism in Bulgaria, the impact of the two books was by no means comparable. Blagoev not only rebuked the Russian Narodniks, but undeniably established the Marxist paradigm in Bulgaria. Despite his dogmatism and “wishful thinking,” Blagoev’s treatise is indubitably compatible with international standards, some-

thing that cannot be claimed for Sklēros' volume. His analysis was original, but removed from any vigorous theoretical qualifications (his "Marxism" was picturesque, but analytically feeble). His impact was negligible; he created no school of thought; his thinking was not refined nor carried further by future generations and, above all, he established no paradigm. His maximum contribution was that he initiated a discussion on the social issue among a limited circle of intellectuals. It needs to be stressed that after 1907 socialism in Greece remained theoretically as confused and "colorful," and the socialist movement as fragmented as it had been before. Only in the light of the actual poverty of socialism can Sklēros' pioneering, yet bounded, contribution be elevated—as constructed historiographically—to a major landmark in the history of Marxism in Greece.

One need not be a fetishist of quantity, but alone the volume of the intellectual production of the two men can provide us with a good yardstick with which to evaluate their respective contributions. Blagoev's collected works span 12 volumes, while in his lifetime he initiated or directed more than four newspapers and translated several works of international socialist literature. Sklēros left only two treatises and a handful of articles, which together do not exceed the length of one volume. He never initiated any kind of public medium (newspaper or journal) and was not involved in any translating or political activity whatsoever. He was not even a leading figure in the creation of the social-democratic party, which Blagoev undeniably was (in the same year, 1891, as his aforementioned book was published). Altogether, the meagerness of written production, be it of original inspiration or simply translation of foreign literature—and this holds not only for Sklēros, but also for the entire generation of his peer socialist intellectuals—has hitherto received no attention. It is, however, a good and healthy indicator in order to evaluate not only the existence or not of a certain intellectual dynamic, but also the degree of compatibility of a certain intellectual movement with international standards. It could be argued, without falling pray to exaggeration, that the Greek socialist intellectuals active up to and including the second decade of the twentieth century showed no great propensity towards the written word. This picture of course changes from the 1920s to the 1940s, decades that witnessed not only the maturation of a generation possessing higher theoretical qualifications, but also with a pretension to original and voluminous

production (Gianēs Kordatos, Pandelēs Pouliopoulos, Serafim Maximos, Dēmētris Glynos, etc.).

A further comparison with the historiographical landscape in Bulgaria is quite indicative. The 1870s and 1880s, the decades preceding the formation of the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic party, were without a doubt not devoid of microscopic socialist activity. However, Bulgarian historiography has barely concerned itself with this period and its proper canonization. The reasons are multiple. In the first place, the communist historiography on socialism had a fixation on Marxism and was thus interested only in highlighting the instances that led to the solidification of the Marxist paradigm, at times even exaggerating or precipitating this ideological evolution to the detriment of the actual pluralism of the period. In the second place, this period indeed has no clear ideological stigma but presents itself rather as a colorful potpourri of pre-Marxist paradigms like populism, anarchism, etc. In addition, however, it should also be attributed to the fact that Bulgarian socialism could demonstrate a rich history by the 1890s; hovering thus over every little detail of the preceding period was not necessary in maintaining this pedigree. Exactly the opposite could be claimed in the case of early Greek socialism. The absence of a weighty presence has led to a magnification of the detail. Minor socialist figures are heralded as major socialist intellectuals, as is the case with Platon Drakoulēs, for example. Similarly, Sklēros' simplistic call to destroy the idols of the past and "begin class struggle in Greece" is viewed as a milestone in the history of Marxism. If Bulgarian communist historiography has had a need to sustain a pedigree of orthodoxy, as witnessed in the previous chapter on the schism between the Broads and the Narrows, Greek (leftist) historiography has been driven by a need for compensation. Thus, it would appear more pertinent with respect to the initial discussion on the periodization of the socialist movement to treat the period between 1870 and 1918 as one chronological block, despite the fact that from 1912–1913 onwards there was an intensification of socialist activity. The abovementioned "indigenization" of the history of socialism is reflected, for example, in this application of arbitrary chronological standards in the periodization of the Greek socialist movement.

A commonly advanced historiographical argument tends to explain the weakness of socialism in Greece with reference to the belated char-

acter of capitalistic development, its dependent nature from the capitalistic center and the structurally determined weakness of the working class.⁵ The “reflex” theory, whereby socialism is the natural outgrowth of the predominance of capitalistic relations and “grows” automatically in correlation and proportion to capitalism, is defied not only by historical experience (the case of Britain serves as the best example) but also by the broader Balkan experience. Nowhere in the Balkans was socialism introduced in the nineteenth century as the result or reflex of the dynamics of local capitalist growth. Rather, it was foremost an intellectual movement, carried almost exclusively by ideologically driven intellectuals and was not generated by the inevitable dialectics of class struggle. A different strand of inquiry advanced by Antonis Liakos has addressed the inception of socialism in Greece from an inverse perspective, from the standpoint of the contextual limitations imposed on the conceptualization of Marxism in Greece in the nineteenth century.⁶ The ensuing analysis proceeds from a similar starting point.

2. Greek Nationalism: The Imaginary of Superiority

The formation of the political sphere in nineteenth-century Greece rests on a precarious, almost paradoxical combination. Whereas on the one hand the Greek state had a functional liberal constitutional system since 1864, perhaps the most liberal of its kind in the Balkans, on the other, it nurtured a very conservative and introspect intellectual establishment. In the realm of the history of ideas, this ideological “regression” meant a clear retreat from the liberal political ideals and visions that had inspired the movement of the Greek Enlightenment and the ensuing war of independence.⁷

Until the military catastrophe of 1922, the act that more or less finalized the borders of the Greek state and buried Greek irredentist aspirations, no other ideological option could compete with the hegemonic status of national messianism in Greece as epitomized in the ideology of the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea). Postulating the vision of an enlarged Greek state, patterned on the grandeur of the Hellenistic and Byzantine empires and a natural heir to the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, nationalism, despite mutations in its basic building blocks, acquired a holistic and imperative character in the Greek intellectual establishment. The preponderance of nationalism as the major “mythomoteur” in the construction of the nation-state was of course not specific to the Greek state. It formed part of the general process of “transition from the ecumenical community of the Balkan Orthodox and the religiously defined millets to the world of the yet uncertain and undefined linguistic nations.”⁸ Great historical traditions and linguistic criteria furnished more or less the common starting point for all Balkan nationalisms. However, despite these basic typological similarities, differences in the timing of the various nationalisms (first- and late-comers) and variations in their constitutive ingredients provided for the particular proliferation of each national imaginary.⁹

The “mirroring” effect, that is the perpetual production and reproduction of reflex images of the self and the other as if in a mirror gal-

lery, has been one of the most durable and dynamic features of the Balkan nationalisms. However, belated nationalisms in the Balkans—such as the Bulgarian, Albanian, Turkish—were confronted with already established, articulate and expansive nationalisms like the Greek and Serbian, for example, and developed partially as a reaction to them. The case of Bulgaria serves as a good example. The Bulgarian self-assertion was directed not only against the Ottoman Empire, but also against Greek cultural hegemony and the pretensions of Greek nationalism to appropriate holistically the imagined community of the Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire. A different strand of Bulgarian nationalism developed partially as a reaction to enforced Russian influences in that country (russophobes). In fact, one cannot but agree with Maria Todorova, who emphasizes the defensive character of Bulgarian nationalism as one of its most salient features.¹⁰ Belated nationalisms tend to be self-assertive, but self-defensive at the same time. By nature of this circumstance, the Bulgarian national imaginary was bound to be not less expansionist, but more modest in character. It is not by coincidence that well-established and confident nationalisms like the Greek and the Serbian, which *a propos* also enjoyed the advantage of an early state formation (ca. 1830s), were able to appropriate for themselves more generic and inclusive legacies. The Greeks felt automatically entitled to represent the Greek-speaking, Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire, while the Serbs due to their early state formation (Serbia as the Balkan Piedmont) felt entitled to the leading role in the creation of the first Yugoslavia.

In the process of discovering and fixing their own ethnic self-designations, belated nationalisms like the Bulgarian, the Albanian and the Bosnian ones would initially have to pass through the identity definitions of the dominant and/or already established ethnic groups; before stabilizing their own ethnic names, Orthodox Bulgarians¹¹ and Albanians¹² defined themselves partially in reference to the cultural capital of Greekness. Similarly, in their formative phase, the Bosnian Muslims would relate principally either to Serbian and Croatian identities. Belated nationalisms had to confront more mirrors; Macedonian nationalism is here perhaps the best example. In developing their own self-definitions, these belated ethnic groups would canalize a great amount of energy into dissociating themselves and demonstrating their distinctiveness from the dominant/established ethnic groups.

The idiosyncrasy, the potency and the self-confidence of the individual national imaginaries were determined by the central question where the fundamental ethno-genetic myths were sought and found. The discovery and veneration of the past was related, in the first place, to the broader project of European historicism and, in the second, to the political relationship of young or aspiring nation-states to the concert of Europe. Unique to the Greek national self-definition was the fact that none of the other Balkan countries could sustain the prestigious imaginary of being the descendants of an ancient high culture. Even the Romanian imaginary,¹³ which due to the “rediscovery” of the Daco-Roman (Latin) past could lay a claim to antiquity, and thus appropriate a greater depth in the horizon of time, could not, however, lay a claim to an imaginary with pretensions to represent “the cradle of European civilization.” The Greek imaginary internalized and subjectively interpreted the European rediscovery of Ancient Greece, as expressed in movements like philhellenism and neoclassicism, by fully equating Greek with European culture.¹⁴ This bearing is testified furthermore by the absence of pronounced anti-Western attitudes in the self-definition of Greek identity in the nineteenth century, as witnessed, for example, in the case of the Serbian Radicals. Not only was Greece an integral part of European culture, but the latter was for “obvious” reasons indebted to the ancient Greek world, a syndrome that gave rise to a series of “evident” expectations from the Greek side. Not all Balkan nationalist imaginaries would enjoy such a propitious starting point when defining their ethno-generic “descent.”¹⁵ The intellectuals of the Bulgarian Renaissance barely found any mention of the Bulgarians in the European historical canon, nor did they dispose of the authoritative antique texts that could prove beyond doubt the historical continuity of their ethnic group. Moreover, both Bulgarians and Albanians would have to first cast off the “stigmatization” of “barbarians” attributed to them by European scholarship.

If the Serbian and the Bulgarian national imaginaries, despite their historicist claims to medieval empires, were constructed on the basis of the virtues of the inherently democratic peasant, in the case of Greece, nothing less but the vocation to live up to the standards of the ancient past would do.¹⁶ The pedigree of a prominent antiquity not only raised the standards of expectations, empowered the national imaginary, proved beyond doubt the continuity of the Greek cultural and linguistic nation and confirmed the status and the contribution of Greek let-

ters to the intellectual heritage of modern Europe, but it also remained for Greeks the pragmatic ticket that ensured their acceptance into the concert of “civilized,” historical European nations. If in the case of both the Serbian and the Bulgarian nationalisms popular culture was the only evident and possible nucleus of the “invented tradition,” in Greece the concept of “popular”—designating the culture of the lower social strata, or the common people—was in proper contradistinction to the ideological pretensions of the national imaginary, and despite rhetorical appeals to “the people” (*laos*), it remained unarticulated throughout the nineteenth and a great part of the twentieth century.

The Romanian national narrative illustrates both similarities and differences to the Greek case. In the first place, both the Greek and the Romanian imaginary would refer to a past identity, which did not stand in contradistinction to European culture. None of the two would reach out for an indigenous, nativist tradition in opposition to European civilization. On the contrary, the “rediscovery” of their past signified their full equation with the European legacy and their proper rehabilitation in the “pantheon” of civilized nations. Resistances to the Western tradition targeted rather the “mimetic” aspects of appropriation and did not imply a full rejection of Western modernity, but rather the quest for a local originality equitable to Western norms. Similar to the Greek narrative, which in the late nineteenth century managed to successfully amalgamate the antique and the Byzantine legacy into a coherent whole, the Romanian was based on a syncretism between the Daco-Roman past, on the one hand, and the medieval traditions of the Moldavian and Wallachian kingdoms, on the other. Both imaginaries ascribed to their respective nations a particular civilizational role with reference to Europe. Postulating themselves as the last bastion of Christian and liberal Europe in the East, a diachronic European bulwark against barbaric invasions and Russian expansionism, the Romanians constructed the identity of an island of European culture amidst a sea of Slavs. The Greeks, on the other hand, perceived themselves as the only possible mediators of European culture in the East. In Greek mental geography, Greece was “the West of the East.” In contrast to the Greek case, the Romanian boyar elite, being bearer of a different cultural tradition (Phanariot/Greek) than the majority of the population “discovered,” appropriated and codified popular culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁷

The diverse national imaginaries were not solely nurtured by the capacity to draw successfully upon delusions of past grandeur. They fed also on already existent taxonomic categories within the Ottoman context. For example, Greekness was associated predominantly with the more urbanized and commercialized sector of the Ottoman Empire, Slavdom with the peasantry. Social conditions imposed additional strains upon the range of choices open to the imaginary. The low degree of social differentiation of both Bulgarian and Serbian societies provided the point of departure for both nationalisms. As has been witnessed, the Serbian Liberals legitimized the liberal project by emphasizing the inherently democratic traditions of the peasantry. Even in a country with a pronounced social differentiation like Romania, or more accurately precisely for this reason, the local Liberal boyar elite sought to legitimize its own status and the existing social order by reference to the “democratic unity” of all classes by idealizing the peasantry and its alleged preservatory, historical role.¹⁸ This was not the case in Greece where the virtues of democracy did not have to be traced back to some kind of inherently democratic peasantry, but in the authoritative past of the Greek *polis*, testified in great texts and exemplified through great philosophers. If the initial “rediscovery” of the antique legacy by the Greek Enlightenment project had sustained a political program supporting the claims of political liberalism (Adamantios Koraes), the antique legacy was progressively depoliticized, giving away to a cult-like awe towards the legacy of the ancestors.¹⁹ Otherwise then, as in most Balkan cases, it was not liberalism that had to be legitimized or rendered compatible with real social conditions, but the reverse: social conditions had to be tailored to an idealized image of enormous prestige.

Moreover, the cultural capital of “Greekness” had an established pedigree in the Ottoman context. Greek as the “sacred language” of the Orthodox Patriarchate allowed for the imaginary appropriation of the diverse populations of the Orthodox millet into the sphere of Greek cultural influence in the era of competing linguistic nationalisms. And correspondingly, the expanding Greek-speaking middle strata of the Ottoman Empire would claim the space covered by the Greek-speaking Orthodox church as their natural space of entrepreneurship and influence.²⁰ For the populations of the Orthodox millet, amassing a Greek education and appurtenance to the Greek cultural sphere were long

associated with the more urbanized strata of the Ottoman Empire and, consequently, with a higher social status. The hegemony of Greek education in the East, the status of the Greek language as the *lingua franca* of the Orthodox populations, the actual and symbolic status of Greek education as a vehicle for social ascendancy to the commercial and entrepreneurial strata of the Ottoman Empire, proved, in Greek eyes, for the indisputability of Greek superiority in the East.

Furthermore it is not insignificant to recall that in the realm of international relations, both Serbia and Bulgaria had to “consummate” their independence. Both countries had to pass through an intermediate, autonomous status phase, in which they were obliged to pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire, before they finally achieved independence. In Serbia, this phase lasted from 1830 to 1878, in Bulgaria from 1878 to 1908. The situation in Greece was different, as it was the first Balkan state to achieve full independence immediately. The abovementioned differences explain why the Greek national imaginary was not only more self-conscious and self-confident, but also more “aristocratic,” that is permeated by an “elitarian” feeling of superiority towards its Balkan neighbors.²¹ Greece as the cradle of Europe and the true embodiment of Western civilization was to be the extension of Europe in the East in a new civilizatory mission. Characteristically, neither of the two other countries under examination would produce similar theories to “Helleno-Ottomanism,” which claimed the ability to subvert the Ottoman Empire from within due to Greek cultural superiority.

Crucial for the formulation of the Greek imaginary was the dynamic interaction between two geographically distinct, yet culturally interactive, worlds: on the one hand, the world of the existing and geographically delimited Greek kingdom (Old Greece), which was elevated to the status of the national center, and, on the other, the broader, far more scattered, indefinite, wealthier and more urbanized world of the Greek Diaspora communities of the Ottoman Empire. This two dimensional horizon was instrumental not only for the national self-definition of the Greeks, but allowed also for the distended nature of the Greek national imaginary. This “far-ranging conceptualization of the Greek nation” delayed the projection of any concrete geographical borders in reference and relevance to concrete national aspirations.²² The existence of these two worlds had several effects. Firstly, it allowed for a kind of imaginary transcendentalism as it fictionally connected

agrarian mainland Greece with the more urbanized Greek element of the diaspora. Secondly, the actual dispersion of the Greek populations within the Ottoman Empire dictated the imperative of reinforcing cohesion and supported the dogma of national unity. Thirdly, and pertinent for our discussion on the fortunes of socialism in Greece, the particular features of Greek nationalism (a distended character and an imaginary of superiority) not only elevated the discussion about the fortunes of the nation to the most dominant intellectual discourse, absorbing the major preoccupations of intellectuals, but most significantly, the potency of the imaginary component led to a proper indifference to the predicaments of reality and the social conditions that actually existed.

The self-confidence of Greek nationalism was to be seriously challenged only towards the end of the nineteenth century as the maturation of neighboring nationalisms cast doubt on the “evident” and leading role of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. For the first time, thus, the Greeks would feel constrained in the hegemonic role they had ascribed to themselves, through the presence of several contenders for territory, as, for example, in the case of Macedonia.²³ The successful establishment of a Bulgarian state (1878), the threatening vision of a San Stefano Bulgaria, the annexation of Eastern Rumelia (1885), the state bankruptcy (1893), the imposition of international economic control (1898), the military debacle of 1897, the Ilinden Uprising (1903) and the Young Turk Revolution (1908) all represented a series of “defeats” that led to a relative loss both of the credibility and the all-pervasiveness of nationalist ideology, or at least in the capacity of the traditional political world and the state to materialize Greek national aspirations. It was manifested in the popular quest for “upheaval” (*anorthosis*), and in 1909 was the current that brought the liberal Venizelos to the forefront of the political scene. Venizelos not only rehabilitated nationalist ideology and rectified the nationalism–politics nexus, but also gave Greek irredentist visions the practical and “realistic” content they had never had.

3. Some Particularities of Greek Socio-Economic Development

Greek nationalism, however, did not draw its strength solely from an imaginary postulating the indisputable superiority of the Greek nation. It was nurtured both psychologically and materially by a world much bigger and more affluent than the Greek kingdom itself. Despite the fact that the fortunes of this world were linked to centers external to the Greek kingdom, it influenced mainland Greece in multiple ways, from the realm of ideology to economics and social mobility. The constant flow of material and human resources between the world of the Greek Diaspora communities and the world of the Greek kingdom explains some particularities in the development of the Greek state.

The “Greeks” embarked on the road to economic prosperity and social ascendancy in the last two centuries of the Ottoman Empire, due to extended commercial and credit activities which allowed them to assume to an extent the position of a “nation-class,” and along with other nationalities/groups (Levantines, Jews, Armenians) to function as intermediaries in the process of opening up the Eastern periphery to the intrusion of European capitalism.²⁴ The creation of the Greek Kingdom (1832) signified both the birth of a national center and delineated at the same time a more dynamic world exterior to it—a broad network of Greek Diaspora communities, stretching from Russia to Egypt and from the shores of the Ottoman Empire to Trieste, Livorno, Marseilles and London. It is needless to emphasize the seminal role, generically speaking, played by diasporic communities in the development of their respective nation-states. One need think only of the catalytic intellectual influence of the Habsburg Serbs on the Serbian principality or the impact of the Istanbul- and Bucharest-based Bulgarian communities in the development of the Bulgarian liberation movement. The significant difference, however, between Greece and its two northern neighbors consists in the fact that whereas with the creation of the nation states in Bulgaria and Serbia the Diaspora communities tended to *abate*, in the case of Greece the Diaspora communities tended to *expand during the nineteenth century*. The creation of the Greek state did not sig-

nify the end of dispersion; on the contrary, it reinforced it. The Greek expatriate communities continued to flourish and were stronger, more affluent and more diversified than the communities of the national center.²⁵ The two worlds (of the Kingdom and Diaspora) were tangential but not synonymous. The connection came to an end only after the catastrophe of 1922, when what Konstantinos Tsoukalas has pointedly called the “dependent Greek micro-empire of the Mediterranean periphery” collapsed.²⁶

The existence of this dual world goes to explain some distinctive characteristics of the Greek economy. Whereas Greece, typologically speaking, showed little differentiation to its northern neighbors in that it remained in essence an agrarian country with an underdeveloped industry, the economic sector and the state profited from an

increment in the flow of non-visible resources and capital mobility. In other words, if criteria like occupation and domestic production are used, Greece was in the beginning of the twentieth century, and would remain until the 1960s, an agrarian country. [However], while the agrarian sector would still dominate the economy, *it was not the sector that set the tone of economic life*. The mass of the agrarian sector contributed more to the inertia of the economy than to its mutation. Change did not come ... from the ambiguous industrial development..., but rather from the development of the tertiary sector which, especially in the beginning of the twentieth century, developed rapidly. *Banking, pecuniary activities and shipping* were [the activities] with the fastest growth rate and the highest profits for invested capital, a circumstance that bestowed the protagonists with particular glamour and prestige.²⁷

The Greek state owed its economic prosperity to the direct or indirect support of the Greeks of the Diaspora and their generous contributions, which flowed as a kind of a permanent pecuniary “injection” into the state mechanism, allowing for its over-inflated and constantly expansive character. According to Tsoukalas’ estimates of the holistic contribution of imported capital to the state finances was as high if not higher than the country’s GNP. For example, donations by Diaspora magnates were seminal for the development of the educational system, while the sponsored exceeded by far the state budget for education.²⁸ According to Tsoukalas, it was precisely this constantly expansive state sector that allowed also for a certain form of social mobility and contributed to rising expectations of professional integration into the state

mechanism. The development of the Diaspora merchant class before and after independence goes to explain “why Greece, up to the Second World War, had the most commercialized economy in the Balkans, with a high degree of urbanization and an over-inflated service sector not explicable in terms of the relatively weak indigenous merchant class.”²⁹

With reference to the specific interest of this work, that is the fortunes and the history of socialism, it should be emphasized that socialism had a negligent impact on the numerous Greek communities of the Ottoman Empire, despite their more urbanized character. Rather, the socialization process associated with the move to the urban milieu was more conducive to nationalization than anything else. The millet system organized around the principle of religious affiliation inhibited or retarded the development of allegiance along class lines. The Greek populations of the Empire remained predominantly under the influence of Greek nationalism as distilled through the educational mechanisms and the various Greek philological circles and clubs operating within the Empire.³⁰ The two-way stream between the mainland and the Diaspora is verified also by the professional itineraries chosen by Greek intellectual cadres. The existence of various Diaspora networks stimulated intellectuals to seek their professional integration in the more affluent world of the Greek Diaspora communities. Several of the radically inclined Greek intellectuals sought a career outside of the Greek kingdom, for example Panagiotēs Panas in Romania, Georgios Sklēros in Egypt, Nikos Giannios in Paris and Istanbul, etc. Intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended to follow well-established itineraries in their geographical mobility, routes already familiar in the times of the Greek Enlightenment, for example Romania or Paris, but they also experimented with new commercial roots like Egypt, for example. This geographical dispersion of intellectual forces, among other more significant reasons discussed below, contributed to the inability to form a consolidated circle of socialist intellectuals in the early twentieth century. Whereas Bulgarian and Serbian intellectuals show centripetal tendencies—after their educational pilgrimage abroad, they tended to return back to the national center—their Greek colleagues show centrifugal tendencies in that they tended to continue their mobility, exploring the opportunities offered by the broader Greek world outside of the Greek kingdom.

Before turning to the study of Greek socialist intellectuals, a final word is necessary on the agrarian issue. The absence of an articulate and organized agrarian movement in Greece during the nineteenth century has already been emphasized in the beginning of this chapter. Agrarianism made its debut in Greece in the inter-war period, which witnessed also the creation of the first agrarian party in 1923. The growing interest in the fortunes of the agrarian world that developed during the 1920s and 1930s was related, firstly, to the establishment of agrarian academies, founded at approximately the same period, and, secondly, to the formation of a group of intellectuals with a growing interest in agrarian issues which included G. Triandafyllidēs, D. Kallitsounakēs, H. Evelpidēs, K. D. Karavidas and others.

For the nineteenth century the connection of socialism to agrarianism remained exceptionally weak not to say non-existent. The engagement of Marinos Antypas in the Thessaly region, who campaigned for the liberation of the local sharecroppers, is an exception that tends to confirm the rule. The same goes for the anemic anarchist movement of the eastern Peloponnese. Both examples were nothing other than episodes which moreover never developed beyond their rather limited local significance. Despite the process of increasing stratification within the agrarian world, problems (such as the current crisis in the Peloponnese from 1893 to 1905, the incorporation into the Greek state of the big estates in Thessaly in 1881 and also in the north after the Balkan Wars), sporadic mobilizations (Kireler in 1910) and occasional vibrations from below, the agrarian issue in Greece did not acquire threatening dimensions. This does not go to say that the usual problems plaguing the Balkan peasantry like usury and indebtedness, lack of expertise and modern agricultural tools, high illiteracy rates, low productivity rates, poverty, etc., were absent in the Greek case. They were not. However, it appears that a series of factors at a macro-historical level defused any development towards social tension in Greece.

In the first place, the relationship between the city and the countryside did not acquire an antagonistic, conflicting form. Rather, the urban world infiltrated the agrarian sphere relatively early on and without much friction. This contrasts with Bulgaria and Serbia, where the tension between the city and the countryside was articulated through an aversion against the bureaucratic, "parasitic" urban world of the center. Despite the fact that Greece experienced an equivalent, if not

greater, expansion of its state machinery, the relationship between the urban and the agrarian world did not acquire the form of a conflict.

The early establishment of universal male suffrage and the acquisition of parliamentary rights inhibited the polarization of society along class lines. It is debatable whether the practice of political clientalism, by incorporating the peasantry in an unequal system of patronage, inhibited the autonomization of the agrarian world. This practice, entrenched in the south, was less effective in the New Lands of the ethnically far more heterogeneous north, which lacked this tradition altogether. The north was apprehensive of the new administrative apparatus imposed from the south, experienced greater population mobility (forced or voluntary), remained under Ottoman control for longer and was exposed with greater frequency to the destructive effects of warfare. Frequent exposure to warfare appears to have been altogether conducive to peasant radicalization. Both Bulgaria and Serbia were involved in a series of successive wars in the late nineteenth century. The Bulgarian population, for example, was involved in wars in 1876, 1877–78, 1885 and 1912–1913. The longest peaceful period, between the Serbian–Bulgarian War of 1885 and the First Balkan War, involved a span of only 27 years. It is no coincidence that one of the first regions to react against the reintroduction of the tithe was the north-east, an area that had been the locus of military operations in 1877–78. The situation had been quite different in Old Greece, where, apart from the debacle of 1897, the country was not involved in warfare for the greatest part of the nineteenth century.

From a diachronic perspective, one of the most durable decompression mechanisms of the Greek countryside was emigration. Stimulated, in the first place, by necessity as a strategy for survival and diversified income and, perhaps on a second plain, as an impetus for social mobility, emigration played an equilibrating role in Greek society in the long run.³¹ The agrarian exodus was a response to the commercialization of agriculture and was triggered by the severe economic crisis that hit the currant production and export trade in the 1890s. Emigrant remittances were a substantial boost for the family economy and, ultimately, the state.

Another long-term factor contributing to the placation of the agrarian world was the policy of protectionism, implemented at a rather early stage by the Greek state. It was again the currant crisis that

acted as the catalyst for the inauguration of an interventionist policy in the agrarian economy. Despite ineffectiveness and procrastination, the state intervened through the creation of a series of institutions aimed at the alleviation of the crisis. The experience gained from the handling of this crisis informed the subsequent interventionist model used, which aimed at controlling the quantity and the prices of certain agrarian products as well as providing state subvention for them.³²

Some additional reasons for the diverse patterns of reaction in the Greek countryside may be sought in the greater degree of commercialization of agrarian production, a trade traditionally oriented towards Western markets. This differed from the Bulgarian experience, where, with the creation of the Bulgarian state, the traditional trade relationships to the Ottoman Empire were severely disrupted. In addition, by progressively reducing the direct taxation burden on the peasantry, precisely as in Serbia, the Greek state managed to secure the peasants' allegiance and keep the strength of the agrarian constituency high and static.³³ Finally, it appears plausible that regional differences in Greece signified also the diverse priorities of the agrarian population. While the main interest of the Peloponnesian small owner was the resolution of the currant crisis, principal preoccupation for the Thessalian sharecropper remained land distribution. These diverse priorities meant that problems remained to a certain extent localized and particularistic. The absence of an intelligentsia that could provide a synthetic approach to agrarian problems and of holistic discriminatory policies aimed at the peasantry hindered, to a certain extent, the political autonomization of the peasantry and the articulation of their concerns.

4. Intellectuals: The Discrete Temptation of Submission

If intellectuals were the principal disseminating agents of socialist ideology in the early Balkan socialist movement, the failure to translate socialism in political terms in Greece was not due to a shortage in the production of intellectual cadres. On the contrary, the public status of intellectuals and the consciousness associated with the engagement in intellectual activity was well established already in the nineteenth century and appears to have solidified by the turn of the century. Intellectual formations like the “demoticist movement”³⁴ have received adequate attention by Greek historiography in the attempt to furnish a history of the sociology of Greek intellectuals.

One strand of inquiry, represented notably by Panagiotēs Noutsos, tends to emphasize the innovative aspect in the social function of intellectuals. According to Noutsos, around the turn of the century there was a break with the previous tradition of the men of letters (*logiū*) in a self-conscious and assertive act on the part of the “new” intellectuals, articulated in the form of a duty to intervene collectively in the social and political sphere.³⁵ Noutsos appears to confound the self-fashioning of the demoticist intellectuals as a new avant-garde and their own construction of a dissident intellectual pedigree with an alleged break in their societal function and their sociological dimension. Contrary to Noutsos’ evaluation, however, Greek intellectuals had intervened in the political sphere since the nineteenth century. In other words, what is the qualitative difference in the societal function of Adamandios Koraēs in the nineteenth century and Georgios Sklēros in the twentieth century? With respect to the role of socialist intellectuals—which is Noutsos’ *métier de spécialisation* par excellence—his evaluation is thoroughly positive. Socialist intellectuals functioned within different formations; they conceptualized, codified and employed socialist ideas with a “fertility” that demonstrated maturity and an indigenous processing capacity. Noutsos attributes the socialist intellectuals’ failure to intervene collectively in the political sphere to their “underestimation of parliamentary struggle and [their] scorn for ‘politicians.’” It is precisely this “under-

estimation of the political sphere” that inhibited them from resorting to collective solutions, along with the lack of organic connections to the traditions of the Second International.³⁶ Noutsos mentions *en passant* the failure of early socialism to connect the economic and the political organization of the working class, but oddly enough, he properly undervalues the crucial role of intellectuals in performing precisely this elementary function. Finally, not only is it unclear why socialist intellectuals should scorn a representative parliamentary system, but it appears as an outright logical incongruence.

In her biographical study of Sklēros and his residence in Egypt at the turn of the century, Rena Stavridē-Patrikiou, has advanced a second approach to the sociology of intellectuals. Taking Sklēros’ biography as a starting point, she has developed a holistic, exegetical model concerning the subsistence strategies of radical intellectuals in Greece. She comes to the conclusion that the fate of radical ideas and intellectuals in Greece was more or less sealed by the fact that Greek society failed to “[materially] sustain revolutionary intellectuals.” In contrast to European societies, which, despite of strong defensive mechanisms against revolutionaries, provided also for the space necessary for their socio-economic survival, Greek society failed to provide niches of economic counter-support for subversive intellectuals.³⁷ Patrikiou’s exegesis seems to rest on two erroneous assumptions. The first is the classification of Sklēros as a subversive revolutionary. Despite the fact that his harmless writings managed to stir turmoil in the morass of Greek intellectual conservatism, Sklēros never showed any inclination for practical revolutionary activity whatsoever. The second erroneous assumption is her totalization of the European experience whereby societies allegedly and willingly “fed” their *enfants terribles*. The subsistence strategies of European radical intellectuals were very diverse and ranged from personal affluence (some were the offspring of the bourgeoisie or, as in the case of Russia, the aristocracy), to sponsorship (as in the case of Engels and Marx), to fundraising (Bakunin), or—as is often forgotten—to the support of energetic and committed wives who acted as breadwinners (in the Blagoev household, for example). The most common survival strategy, however, was the development of self-help networks and often engaging in an additional profession. With the institutionalization of parties, the creation of publications, translation work, etc., socialist intellectuals started earning a living from the infrastructure they had cre-

ated. Making ends meet in this manner, or living on the verge of poverty, as the case Plekhanov and others, is the sad and often unknown personal story of several socialist revolutionaries. One is left to wonder, though, as to why Greece should represent an exceptional case in what seems to have been the rule in the international socialist movement.

Patrikiou substantiates her claim further by comparing the fortunes of the demoticist movement, which enjoyed the economic sponsoring of affluent Diaspora Greeks, with the lack of patronage in the case of socialist intellectuals.³⁸ Keeping in mind, however, that no socialist movement in the Balkans was sponsored by their respective “bourgeoisie,” it appears pertinent to reverse the question. Is the weakness of the socialist alternative to be credited to the refusal of the Diaspora elite to finance radical movements, or did it form part of the horizon of expectations of intellectuals that they would connect to the existing networks of patronage? A tentative answer to this question will be provided in what follows.

It could well be considered a Greek “record” that Greek society produced its first—strictly speaking—socialist intellectual only in 1907 (Sklēros), while for almost a century the country witnessed no movement that seriously challenged or questioned the leading assumptions of the political status quo, not even in the form of a radical democratic (Jacobin) movement. Short-lived episodes of political radicalization like the anarchist movement of the Eastern Peloponnese at the turn of the century remained localized, peripheral and with no serious political echo. Equally, the demoticist movement, to the limited extent that it raised political issues, did not question the hegemonic pretensions, but rather the building blocks, of Greek nationalism. The ideological preoccupations of Greek intellectuals remained primarily entrenched in the national issue and the linguistic question. Having a weak presence and being of a moderate theoretical caliber, the socialist critique was fractured, subsumed under, and incorporated partially into the above-mentioned ideological preoccupations, a circumstance that is at the same time indicative of the impotence of socialism to counterpoise an independent ideological alternative.

One could well draw a contrast here to the Romanian case, where Marxism was introduced in the late nineteenth century as a successful paradigm for social critique via the medium of literary criticism. The group of initial “narodnik” intellectuals assembled around Dobroge-

anu-Gherea and his *Contemporanul* journal posed an effective intellectual challenge to the nationalist intellectuals of the “Junimea” group. As emphasized by Georges Haupt, “socialist literary criticism fulfilled in Romania a militant function.”³⁹ The difference in the outcome could well be attributed to the higher theoretical “niveau” of the Romanian socialists, their diverse ethnic background⁴⁰ and the imminently explosive peasant situation that gave social critique a very tangible basis. The inability of socialism to carve out for itself an autonomous political space in Greece can also be attributed to its failure to become a vehicle for the articulation of other emancipatory movements. While in Bulgaria, for example, a strand of feminist critique was disseminated via the socialist movement (Anna Karima, Vela Blagoeva), in Greece feminism was considered almost exclusively in bourgeois channels. Interesting, and quite distinctive in comparison to other Balkan countries, is also the fact that in Greece social protest was expressed through anti-clerical, yet religious, channels of an apocalyptic or messianic character: for example, in the Peloponnese in the last decades of the nineteenth century through the chiliastic religious-political movement of Apostolos Makrakēs or through local groups of a syncretistic Christian-Socialist nature.⁴¹

Most importantly, in the political realm, a functional constitutional system allowed for the partial incorporation of moderate socialist themes by the established political parties, as in the populist agenda of the Deligiannēs fraction around the turn of the century, for example.⁴² The early establishment of universal male suffrage (1864) and the granting of full political rights created an open political system in the Greek case, far more inclusive and representative than in the neighboring Balkan countries. It should not be overlooked, of course, that parliamentary practice in Greece developed rather formalistic characteristics, supplemented simultaneously by informal political practices that naturally adulterated the nature of the political system. However, a synergy of factors provided for a stable political system and, inversely, it was precisely this formal stability that seemed to solidify the informal side of political practices.⁴³ A comparison with other political systems in the Balkans is quite illustrative.

In Romania, the local boyar elite managed to preserve its hegemonic status as the ruling political group, and both major political formations of the nineteenth century, the Conservatives and the Liber-

als, recruited their cadres more or less from the same social stratum. A liberal constitutional system was introduced in 1866, as the result of a political compromise between the two leading political fractions. The Romanian constitution, modeled on the Belgian one of 1831, guaranteed full civil rights and freedoms, a concession to the Liberals' quest for equality, while at the same time, through the existence of a high property qualification for the suffrage, the system of electoral colleges and a bicameral system, it controlled the access to power, which is what the Conservatives preferred. Thus, the majority of the population was *de facto* excluded from direct electoral participation, while the boyar elite confirmed and solidified its privileged social status by turning social privilege to political status through legal means. The monarchy was confined to its constitutional role and the establishment of constitutionalism did not come about as the result of political struggle. Despite the fact that in concrete practice, the political system was prey to manipulation and adulteration, full political rights—precisely as in the case of Greece—were guaranteed. This led to a flourishing urban and intellectual life, but increased dramatically the disparity between the urban and the agrarian world, aggravating their already defective relationship. A perennially explosive agrarian situation provided for regular convulsions in the Romanian countryside.

Quite different was the situation in Serbia, where the establishment of constitutional rule was the result of a long-lasting struggle throughout the nineteenth century between successive monarchs of the Obrenović dynasty and the political parties. It proved to be an exercise in confrontation and compromise, resulting in the 1888 constitution, which was effectively put into practice first in 1903. The existence of an open electoral system allowing for massive electoral participation enabled the Radicals to follow the option of the parliamentary path to power, as we have witnessed in the Serbian chapter. By mobilizing the peasantry, thus winning over the most numerous social strata in the country, they simultaneously guaranteed their absolute preeminence in the political scene. As already discussed in regard to Bulgaria, the derailment of the political game into an internal arrangement between the king and the political elites, sealed the fate of constitutionalism in Bulgaria and allowed for the emergence of an unstable and fragile political system, burdened additionally by an extremely fragmented political landscape.

It was precisely these shortcomings of the liberal system that induced nineteenth-century socialist intellectuals in Serbia and Bulgaria to revitalize the revolutionary legacy of the liberation period. By emphasizing the social and the political dimensions, that is, the egalitarian and democratic aspirations of liberation ideology, intellectuals (Radicals and Socialists) reactivated earlier traditions as part of an indispensable pedigree, allowing them to sustain and articulate contemporary socio-political protest. Marković returned to the legacy of the liberation struggle in order to demonstrate where the Serbian revolution had gone astray from its initial emancipatory objective. For his part, Blagoev referred back to the Bulgarian “apostles” in order to contest the appropriation of the liberation legacy for purely nationalistic purposes, emphasizing the social and democratic dimensions of the liberation struggle. In both cases, intellectuals redirected the revolutionary legacy away from its external, irredentist component towards internal issues related to aspirations for a more democratic and just social order. The opposite was to be the case in Greece, where the existence of a functional political system made the reactivation of the liberal-democratic legacy of the Enlightenment redundant. In Greece, liberation ideology was to retain only its external, irredentist facet, oriented mainly towards the attainment of nationalist objectives. The fact that Greek socialist intellectuals did not seek to instrumentalize the potential of the liberation legacy politically is further testimony of the receptivity of the political system. With the exception of Sklēros, who did not deliberate over the democratic nature of the revolution, but rather sought to prove its bourgeois character, the socio-political legacy of the liberation ideology is lacking as a *topos* in the narratives of the Greek Socialists. As a legacy it was reactivated again only in the resistance struggle of the 1940s, where a similar contextual situation demanded an ideological concoction with both a pedigree and a social content. The National Liberation Front (EAM) made adequate use of these paragon situations and literally wove together national liberation traditions, liberation ideology and the quest for social transformation, achieving a high communicative potential through the proper domestication of Communist ideology in the Greek context. A different lineage was sought in the case of the resistance movement in Yugoslavia. Whereas the Greek resistance movement could mobilize the history of the nineteenth-century liberation wars and connect it to the genealogy of liberation

struggle, the Yugoslavs, whose resistance movement had to integrate very diverse national traditions, were incapable of relating to the homogeneous, and commonly shared, tradition of liberation struggle. In that respect, the partisan movement had to become *ipso facto* the founding moment of a common genealogy. The above observation goes also to explain the different codifications and legitimization strategies of the partisan legacy in the two countries; in the case of Greece it took the direction of “patriotic communism” in an attempt to extirpate the stigma of national “traitors,” while in communist Yugoslavia the idea of a supra-national pedigree postulating “Brotherhood and Unity” was developed. So much for the inventions and the uses of tradition.

For the above-mentioned reasons, radically oriented intellectuals in Greece found either little ground for radical propaganda or were quickly subsumed into the hegemonic discourses of their times. Greek intellectuals operated within an open and inclusive political system, and thus had less of an incentive for a complete systemic break than their Serbian and Bulgarian colleagues. As pointedly observed by Antonis Liakos, for Greek socialist intellectuals there was no real “point of rupture” with the political system:

Despite violations, the parliamentary practice in the kingdom of Greece absorbed and neutralized political tensions ... Modernization in this context did not signify a holistic subversion, that is, a revolutionary transition from one status quo to another. There was no need consequently to resort to theoretical solutions, including Marxism, not even to the social-democratic model of successive social systems. Moreover, there existed, at least officially, the possibility for political reform, amelioration and critique. What was basically contested was the behavior of the players, not the rules of the game. The lack of internal social tensions and concomitant polarization allowed Greek intellectuals to consider the social problem as something unrelated to Greek society ... Since the problem did not concern them, intellectuals could establish critical positions towards capitalism. However, the lack of motives deprived them of the possibility to delve into or refute [these positions], [which resulted in them] defending the traditions and the ideological foundations of the establishment.⁴⁴

Due to the lack of an urgent incentive for a systemic break with the political establishment, intellectuals sought principally their integration into the status quo of the state mechanism.⁴⁵ As a natural consequence of this circumstance, intellectuals participated in traditional

political practices like patronage and clientalism. Where not otherwise stated, access to a patronage system, as for example the demoticist network, provided not only for a subsistence strategy, but also for a means of professional integration and, perhaps, of social ascendancy. In a pattern demonstrating a remarkable continuity and longevity since the nineteenth century, short-lived intellectual formations were often dissolved and outbreaks of radicalism usually silenced, to be followed all too frequently by the integration of radical cadres into the political *établissement*.

The early group of radical democrats (1870–1890) comprising of T. Filemonas, A. Petsalēs, G. Mavromatas, G. Filaretos was to a great extent absorbed by one of the two greatest nineteenth-century political fractions, the Trikoupi party. Trenchant democratic ideas were promulgated by a group of radical intellectuals in Achaia as well, notably by P. Chalkiopoulos, A. Michalopoulos and A. Rigopoulos (1860–1880). Castigating established political practice, they envisaged alternatives ranging from the creation of parties of principle to direct popular empowerment. In concrete political practice, however, both Michalopoulos and Rigopoulos collaborated with the strong local clientalistic fractions in their home region in the Peloponnese. As pointed out by Chrēstos Lyrintzēs:

It would be a serious misunderstanding if the impression was created that Michalopoulos and Rigopoulos introduced new political practices in Achaia. On the contrary, they often had to make compromises and sacrifice their declarations on the altar of political practice. Their cooperation with the local fractions shows that adaptability and compromise were necessary ingredients if they wished to escape marginalization and have some impact on the political scene. [I]t should be equally stressed that [their] discourse, despite poignant social contents, did not defy the existing institutional-parliamentary context. We observe, in other words, a strong justification of the existing system and the institutions of representation, which were not exposed to any substantial critique, even within the context of a radical discourse. All this, despite the observed deficiencies and the repeated critique on the way the system functioned. This goes to demonstrate the receptivity that representative institutions had in Greece and explains their smooth functioning throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

That does not go to say that examples of more resilient political behavior were completely extinct. The “Ionian School” of radicalism (the

democrat Rokos Choidas, the radical/socialist Marinos Antypas and others), owing to the different historical traditions and social conditions prevalent in the Ionian Islands, produced a certain model of intellectual/activist. However, its duration was short-lived, its influence limited and it did not really “fertilize” entrenched practices in the mainland. The region, nevertheless, continued to produce intellectuals of a radical/socialist orientation; the Dēmētratos brothers, for example, were to contribute to the later unification of the socialist movement. All in all, however, when assessing the larger picture, it was not continuity, but rather discontinuity that proved to be the most persistent problem in the production of consequent generations of socialist intellectuals. Despite the fact that sediments and fragments of radical ideas were not always completely extinguished at local level, there was no direct follow-up by consequent generations, and thus no build-up of knowledge, experience and tradition. It is quite indicative that a great number of the early socialist intellectuals acted and died as loners. This is valid as much for Stavros Kallergēs⁴⁷ as for Marinos Antypas. The inability to maintain continuity in the case of Greece contrasts greatly with the case of Bulgaria for example, where we witnessed how generations of socialist teachers produced linearly generations of socialist students, providing for continuity in tradition. The fact that Greece’s best-known “early Marxist” could not sustain a standard legacy is also quite indicative.

Sklēros was considered in the first decade of the twentieth century to be the most sophisticated socialist of his times, while his writings were celebrated by a small circle of adherents as truly groundbreaking. Sklēros was the only intellectual of his generation—the generation active in the first two decades of the twentieth century—to attempt a “Marxist” reading of Greek society and produce a lengthy treatise on the social issue.⁴⁸ Despite inconsistencies and contradictions, his amateur application of Marxist methodology and his deficient idealized explanations, he was the first to attempt a creative application of historical materialism and provide a rudimentary sketch of an exegetical narrative that situated Greece within an evolutionary scheme of social development. He castigated the conservatism of the Greek intellectual establishment, the paralyzing effect of the mythology of the great historical traditions, underlined the bourgeois character of the Greek Revolution and the Greek state and, finally, hinted at, albeit in simplistic

(but for Greek circumstances certainly innovative) terms the necessity of destroying the notion of national consensus and inaugurating a period of class warfare, which he believed was the only means for social regeneration. Moreover, he attempted to organically connect the linguistic issue, which consumed a great deal of the labor of the intellectuals at the time, with the socialist project. The struggle for the popular language was understood to be a means for holistic criticism, exposing the deceitful ideological pretensions of the political establishment and its “unfounded Byzantine pseudo-aristocratic and classical traditions.” Archaic language was the manipulative instrument through which the plutocracy held the population in ignorance and exercised its political hegemony. Conversely, popular language was the authentic expression of the lower classes and the only adequate linguistic medium for the representation of reality. The linguistic and the social issue were thus interconnected and interdependent. Sklēros’ correlation of the linguistic and the social issue were carried further, to some extent, by Kostas Chatzopoulos.⁴⁹ But, overall, the intellectual fermentation he initiated remained without a successor. There is no continuity of intellectual fertilization with subsequent generations of socialists. It cannot even be ascertained for certain whether the forces that actually led to the unification of the socialist movement in Greece, that being the Thessaloniki-based organization Workers Solidarity Federation, were acquainted with his writings.

The previously described practice of domesticating intellectuals did not change significantly with the turn of the century, despite the appearance of new, more dynamic and more sophisticated groups of radical intellectuals. The demise of the “Japanese” and the “Sociologists” in the first decade of the twentieth century was as spectacular as their political rise had been. The “Japanese”—they received their nickname, which was meant to characterize their bellicosity and dynamism, after the sensational victory of the Japanese over the Russians in 1905—came together in 1906. The group was built around the personality of the promising lawyer and politician Dēmētrios Gounarēs and consisted of P. Protopapadakēs, S. Dragoumēs, H. Vozikēs, A. Alexandrēs, A. Panagiotopoulos and E. Repoulēs. They acted as a concerted group, which during its parliamentary debut demanded the complete overhaul of the political system, the upgrading of parliamentary practices, political transparency, real popular representation and governmental ef-

ficiency.⁵⁰ The promising Japanese attack was short-lived and the “offensive” ended when Gounarēs was offered the ministry of economics in the Theotokēs government of June 1908. While this led effectively to the disintegration of the group, Gounarēs’ career, however, took off. A populist and a radical in his youth—not negatively inclined towards ideas relating to social issues—in 1915 found himself at the head of the “conservative” anti-Venizelist fraction (the Popular Party), where he remained until his execution in 1922. During the National Schism, Protopapadakēs and Vozikēs joined his Popular Party, while Repoulēs and Alexandrēs were absorbed by the Liberal Party (the Venizelists).

The second most important intellectual formation at the turn of the century, the “Sociologists”⁵¹ received its name from the homonymous society (Sociological Society), founded in 1907. The group consisted of A. Papanastasiou, P. Aravandinos, K. Triandafyllopoulos, A. Delmouzos, T. Petmezas, T. Koutoupēs and A. Mylonas, the majority of whom were law students who had engaged in postgraduate studies in Germany. Influenced by reformatory socialism and theoretically certainly more sophisticated than anything socialist Greece had experienced, they formulated the first coherent social-democratic program in the country and made their presence felt in the 1909 Goudi Uprising.⁵² They founded the People’s Party in 1910 and were “absorbed” that same year by the Venizelist fraction, in which they functioned from that moment onwards as its leftist flank.

However, even these more sophisticated groups of intellectuals did not breach with the old established political practices. New and old coexisted in a hybrid synergy, as the old “domesticated” the new. Despite new ideas about class struggle and mass organizations, intellectuals like the above-mentioned “Japanese” and “Sociologists” entered the political arena, making use of inherited “local parties” and traditional constituencies, that is, the clientalistic networks inherited from previous generations. Papanastasiou (the leading figure of the Sociologists) relied on his father’s traditional constituency in Levidi, while Aravandinos on his own equivalent in Corinth. Gounarēs (the leading figure of the Japanese) inherited also considerable political capital from his father’s local party in Patras. The capacity of the old to domesticate the new, or vice versa, the impotence of the new to seriously challenge the old, is reflected additionally in the political choices of intellectuals. While Gounarēs, judging from his personal ideological inclinations, fit-

ted rather the profile of the Liberal Party (Venizelists), he pragmatically opted to continue his career as leading figure of the Popular Party (the anti-Venizelists), which, in effect, personified and represented the traditional Greek political establishment. His inherited political baggage in Patras facilitated his rapprochement with the old political world, and determined his political affiliation in a decisive manner.

Intellectuals stemming from the better off echelons of society like the Japanese and the Sociologists, with ingrained connections to the state class, were ideally situated to make the best use of inherited political baggage, which most of them effectively did. For intellectuals lacking this privileged background, the necessity to connect to one of the established networks of power, authority and financial sponsorship was of seminal importance. The reluctance to break with the political system had as a consequence the absorption of intellectuals by the establishment. A paragon situation is provided in the case of Romania. The dissolution of the first social-democratic party⁵³ in 1900 was due to the secession of a group of intellectuals who, under the theoretical influence of Constantin Stere's neopopulism and through his political mediation, broke away from the Socialists to join the ruling Liberals. The dissention of the socialist intellectuals was caused just as much by the frustration emanating from the "political failure" of the Social Democrats as by the new prospects of professional ascendancy made possible through integration into one of the two major political formations in the country. In the Romanian, as in the Greek, case, a political system guaranteeing basic political liberties demotivated radical cadres.

If, on the whole, the political system did not exactly send Greek socialist intellectuals to the barricades, intellectuals demonstrated neither great resilience nor durable resistance. Alexandros Delmouzos, a member of the Sociologists and cofounder of the pioneering girls' school in Volos,⁵⁴ easily renounced his socialist leanings and his connection to the workers' center of Volos when accused of subversive activity against the "customs and morals" of the local society and the church. In the notorious *Trial of Nauplion* (1914), he distanced himself from his colleagues and tried to downplay his collaboration with the workers' center. He apologized for his radical positions, claiming that he simply tried to "fight against the misunderstood socialism," while seeking to "limit the labor struggle to the confines of our national traditions."⁵⁵ Interestingly enough Delmouzos was acquitted, while rumors

abounded that it was the invisible hand of Venizelos that contributed to this felicitous end result.

The most sweeping absorption of intellectuals in the early twentieth century was completed by the Venizelist (liberal) camp. Venizelos, apprehensive of the successes of the broader European radical movements and conscious of the process of social polarization incipient in his modernization scheme, embarked on a two-fold strategy, involving, on the one hand, the introduction of social legislation *à la* Bismarck, in order to frustrate the politicization of the labor movement via the quest for social rights and, on the other, obstruction strategies in order to delay the unification of the socialist forces in Greece, an effort seriously strengthened after the incorporation of the Jewish-led, socialist (and Thessaloniki-based) "Workers' Solidarity Federation" organization into the Greek state. The most effective strategy was the baiting of the intelligentsia. The rapprochement between Venizelos and the progressively minded intellectuals was formed on the basis of a reciprocal pact. Venizelos offered a comprehensive and attractive program of political reform and rationalization, a most sophisticated modernizing project, as he appropriated the most trenchant demands of the intellectuals (social, agrarian, linguistic, administrative and educational reform), turning them into programmatic points of his own party's political agenda. In exchange, he offered intellectuals posts in his administration, a controlled share of power and the possibility to materialize their program within his own hegemonic party formation. Moreover, Venizelos created a wholly new institutional framework, capable of absorbing and utilizing highly specialized personnel. Negotiating with intellectuals on an individual basis, Venizelos managed to erode group solidarities. Apart from the Sociologists, Venizelos won over also the most energetic group of Demoticists (D. Glēnos, M. Triandafyllidēs, A. Delmouzos) from the Educational Club (*Ekpaideftikos Omilos*), who were nominated for key positions in the ministry of education in order to oversee the primary-school reform. Many of the intellectuals absorbed by Venizelos' ambitious reformatory project also represented the technocratic intelligentsia that manned the institutions responsible for a series of important reforms, particularly in the agrarian and the labor sectors.

The First World War and the ensuing National Schism⁵⁶ saw the crossing over of the last vestiges of freelance socialist intellectuals

(N. Giannios, K. Chatzopoulos, P. Drakoulēs, K. Theotokēs and G. Sklēros) into the Venizelist camp. Before picking up on the apologetic discourse of the protagonists themselves, which has readily been reproduced in Greek historiography, it deserves to be underlined that the phenomenon did not involve one or two singular cases, but rather represents a generic volte-face, and is for this reason rather interesting. In the first place, it would appear that socialist intellectuals were faced with a serious dilemma. Adapting strict neutrality according to internationalist principles meant, in essence, an endorsement of the policies of the throne and its “conservative” supporters, while, on the other hand, supporting Venizelos and the Entente meant an abandonment of socialist principles.⁵⁷ Following further this exegetical line, the monarchical reaction seemed to jeopardize Venizelos’ modernizing project, a project that corresponded to the aspirations of many progressively minded intellectuals. Furthermore, the king’s unconstitutional handling of the political situation seemed to jeopardize the democratic traditions of the country. Siding thus with Venizelos seemed to guarantee the continuation of reforms, the solidification of the leftist flank of the Liberals and the defense of the democratic traditions of the country.⁵⁸ Opting, thus, for Venizelos was nothing else but opting for the lesser evil. As phrased by Giannios, “we are not Venizelists; however, we [hold] that whoever assaults Venizelos today allies himself willy-nilly with King Constantine, and the Socialists choose the lesser evil.”⁵⁹ Another version emphasizes the commitment of socialist intellectuals to evolutionary socialism. According to this explanation, the Socialists deemed the Venizelist period as the necessary stage of bourgeois development in Greek society. Safeguarding, thus, the achievements of the bourgeois “revolution” was the necessary precondition for the development of socialism.⁶⁰ Needless to emphasize, the theoretical level of the Greek Socialists was far too low for a calculation of that kind. Moreover, apart from Sklēros, no other such testimonies exist that discuss Venizelism in the light of the indispensable bourgeois revolution.⁶¹ Furthermore, there is no evidence that his opinion was deemed authoritative by the majority of socialist intellectuals. Here, we are obviously dealing with a retrospective reading of the historiographical canonization of Venizelism as bourgeois modernization, a scheme that is imposed on the far more simplistic calculations of the Greek socialist intellectuals.

An additional explanation may be sought in the proclivity of Venizelos towards demoticism, a topic that moved intellectuals deeply, who also expected a great deal from Venizelos' energetic intervention in matters linguistic and educational reform. Indisputably, one of the most plausible reasons for the rapprochement between Venizelos and the socialist intellectuals was nationalism. Despite the occasional internationalist rhetoric, the majority of the Greek Socialists shared, in one way or the other, the basic assumptions of the Greek superiority complex. Socialism had never been framed as the absolute antithesis to the almighty nationalist discourse. The Greek Socialists lacked not only programmatic positions on the topic, but also organic connections to the internationalist ambience of European socialism. The lack of immunity to the basic pretensions of Greek nationalism certainly proved to be a slippery ground towards Venizelism. Nevertheless, taken together the above reasons are insufficient to explain the intellectuals' volte-face towards Venizelos. It appears far more plausible to contextualize their behavior in the pattern of domestication that we have observed already in the nineteenth century. To the degree that the Greek Socialists were not compelled by political reasons to unite, their conduct remained always entrenched in the logic of individual behavior. Consequently, the fact that they were voluntarily trapped in the logic of the National Schism appears everything but unnatural. Having neglected to create their own alternatives, defending Venizelism seemed progressive enough. After all, they had no alternative project of their own to defend, all the more so considering that the defense of Venizelism was coupled also with the small rewards of office. Giannios—previously a Venizelist critic—became inspector of labor in the Provisional Government, while Chatzopoulos and Theotokēs took up less attractive positions in the official state censorship organization.

In order to estimate the available alternatives, the case of the Workers' Solidarity Federation (hereafter Federation) offers a good example. The Thessalonikian socialist organization⁶² initially sided with the anti-Venizelist fraction due to its policy of wartime neutrality that, for different reasons, was equally favored by the Federation, which opted for the territorial status quo in the Balkans and the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. However, the organization soon corrected its course, and went its own independent way. The Federation was predominantly Jewish in composition, which made it resilient to the siren

calls of Greek nationalism, and having its own established organization at stake, managed to relocate itself on a third course, keeping equal distances from both fractions involved in the National Schism. Thus, the Federation was *de facto* the only organization that managed to resist Venizelos and became the motor for the unification of the socialist forces in Greece.

An additional observation is appropriate here. The Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, founded in 1918, was not the outcome of the concerted efforts of socialist intellectuals, as in the majority of the other Balkan countries. Neither the "intellectuals" of the Federation nor the auxiliary socialist figures that contributed to the unification of the socialist movement, like A. Siderēs or P. Dēmētratos, belonged to the most prominent of the socialist intellectuals (K. Chatzopoulos, G. Sklēros, N. Giannios, P. Drakoulēs) active in Greece from the turn of the century onwards. Rather, they may be classified as professionals with an intellectual inclination, in that they came from a background that represented an intermediate level between intellectual and professional labor. Avraam Benaroya, the leading soul of the Federation, was a teacher and a typesetter. P. Dēmētratos was a teacher by profession as well. They never enjoyed either the prestige or the title of an intellectual that the previous generation of socialist "star-intellectuals" had enjoyed. This logically raises the broader question concerning the social connotations associated with the status of an "intellectual" in Greek society.

Deducing from their choices, Greek intellectuals did not seek professional integration in "lower" professional echelons. In contrast to their Bulgarian colleagues, for example, they barely engaged in the educational sector. To the degree that professional integration was sought in education, in the case of the Sociologists it was primarily at the highest, that is, the academic level. Characteristically, and this constitutes a particularity of the Greek case, in no other Balkan country was socialism introduced as a sociological theory, that is, along with the establishment of sociology as an academic discipline, as in the example of the Sociologists and the Sociological Society. Whereas both populism in Serbia and socialism in Bulgaria were introduced as "subversive" ideological alternatives to the *status quo*, in Greece socialism was introduced with the quasi-canonical nonchalance of an academic paradigm. Precisely this circumstance is illustrative of the air

of “respectability”—not to say conformity—with which socialism was introduced in Greece.

In their options for professional integration, Greek intellectuals displayed a preference for the liberal professions, freelance journalism or engagement in purely intellectual and literary activities. In other words, their professional choices support the conclusion that there existed a clear hierarchy designating the social significance of the division of labor (intellectual–manual) and the social status that sustained it. All the above led to the assumption that Greek intellectuals showed tendencies of greater bourgeoisification. Access to higher or specialized education automatically implied certain expectations and opened up a trajectory of social ascendancy. The state mechanism and the Diaspora networks were the two most favored routes to professional integration. The thesis emphasizing the intellectuals’ aspirations for social ascendancy is further corroborated by the negligence of Greek socialist intellectuals to relate in any, even rhetorical or imaginary manner to the needs of the agrarian world.⁶³ The countryside was not the world one aspired to understand, but rather the world one left behind. While for the Serbian Radicals relating to the agrarian basis appeared natural, as much in terms of their ideology as in terms of their social background, the opposite was the case in Greece. Moreover, the actual social process of embourgeoisement was sustained by the imaginary of antique grandeur, which presumed Greece to be the land of the philosophers and “intellectuals” par excellence. It comes thus as no surprise that intellectuals not only sought their integration into the state, but, in what would appear as a paradox for socialist intellectuals, they even entertained a certain “scorn” for the lower classes.

Lightheartedly, Greek historiography has overlooked some of these embarrassing moments, which rather clearly allude to the logic of elitism that permeated the thought of socialist intellectuals. Nikos Gianios, founder of several socialist circles and considered a major socialist figure in the first decades of the twentieth century, did not hide his lack of empathy for the “illiterate, narrow-minded, unmannered worker.” In his leaflet *The Propagandist of Socialism*,⁶⁴ he warned the socialist intellectual of the discouraging experience associated with propaganda among the working class. For “when you *descend to the level of the worker* and caress his weaknesses, you are deprived of your prestige

until that moment when you can fling his weaknesses back at him.”⁶⁵ Giannios emphasized that by simply preaching from a podium, the socialist intellectual could expect no serious and effective results. “[For the future propagandist] it is better to squeeze himself into the people, even if he has to keep silent his most sincere feelings at being insulted everyday by the imprudence of the unmannered [workers], who insult him.”⁶⁶ After the Socialist Center of Athens invited the socialist intellectual Chatzopoulos—at that time resident in Germany—to take up the lead of the socialist movement in Greece, Giannios reported on the encounter:

Chatzopoulos came down to Greece, encouraged by our voices, thinking that we had completed the initial rough work, and that what was left to be done was [the work] suitable for his superior intellectual capacities ... We brought him in 1914, into a primitive environment in the midst of the petty intrigues, suspicions, vulgarities, silly egoism and the viscid jabber of the uneducated Greek worker. From the very first day, Chatzopoulos felt like a fish out of water. Seeking, above all, ethical people, he confronted villainy even among the few intellectuals that we possessed at that time. His kind attempt to unite all socialist forces in the country stumbled as our efforts did for the same [reasons]: the lack of education and the disparity of the intellectual level of the people we were trying to fraternize with.⁶⁷

Other Balkan socialist intellectuals shared the frustration emanating from the non-receptivity of the “working element”; Bozveliev provides adequate testimony of similar conditions in Bulgaria. What is striking, however, about the Greek socialist intellectuals is their indisputable feeling of superiority, the clear perception of social disparity between the intellectuals’ “caste” and the simple folk, and, finally, the lack of empathy towards the social subject they were called to liberate in the name of socialism. It is no wonder that minor socialist forces arising progressively and directly from the base, like S. Paliouras, a barber and a socialist, would urge the socialist intellectuals to abandon their “airy-fairy” ways in order to reach down to the people, to educate and organize the workers.⁶⁸

And indeed, this constitutes the quintessence of the problem in the history of early socialism in Greece, that is, *the “failure” to connect socialist theory to the incipient labor movement*. The conjunction thus between the political and the economic organization of the working class, brought about traditionally through the mediating function of social-

ist intellectuals, remained unfulfilled. Socialist intellectuals entertained at maximum a "platonic" relationship with the nascent labor movement, notwithstanding its rudimentary and primitive character. Despite abstract and rhetorical appeals to the proletariat and the working class, the links of the socialist intellectuals to the lower laboring strata, not to mention the peasantry, were in the best cases of a random nature. Socialist intellectuals remained entrenched in the intellectuals' cast, aspiring to social ascendancy, geographically dispersed, engaged predominantly in intellectual issues like the linguistic debate, but with little practical application. The economic organization of the working strata—as expressed in the multiplication of workers' unions and centers—proceeded more by nature of the circumstances, and deprived of intellectual and theoretical guidance. The socialist intellectuals, in other words, failed to put themselves effectively on the head of the slowly emerging working class movement and give political content to the rising demands of the laboring population. Only in rare cases was the economic organization of labor under the influence of socialist guidance, as was the case with the Volos Workers' Center.⁶⁹ As already mentioned the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece was founded predominantly on the initiative of syndicalists and skilled workers/intellectuals and not on the initiative of intellectuals pure. Characteristically, in Greece the unification of syndicalist organizations in the Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) antedated the formation of a political party. The syndicalist unification took place in October 1918, while the Social Democratic Party was founded a month later, in November 1918. Unlike the case in Bulgaria where the political entity (1891) antedated syndicalist unification (1904),⁷⁰ in Serbia, both bodies were created simultaneously by the same founding congress in 1903.⁷¹

Generally speaking, until the first decades of the twentieth century, the lack of objective conditions promoting the political radicalization of Greek intellectuals (political suppression for example), conditioned by and large the fate of socialism as an intellectual movement. Along with the lack of a real incentive, personal empathy additionally inhibited socialist intellectuals from perceiving their political unification as an imperative.⁷² Socialism remained, to a great extent, confined to the voluntaristic and introspective objectives of intellectual circles with no clearly defined local or international objectives or obligations. This also explains partially the demise of the socialist star-intellectuals with the

appearance on the political scene of more sophisticated and practice-oriented organizations like the Federation.⁷³

Moreover, the low theoretical level of Greek socialist intellectuals allowed for variegated definitions as to the goal and purpose of socialism. Intellectuals like Drakoulēs presented socialism as an exotic and eclectic potpourri consisting of Christian altruism and justice, the quest for ecological urban spaces (*alseoupoleis*) and abstinence from carnal meals (*akreofagia*), and that in a country where the majority of the population barely included meat in its daily diet. Most importantly, until 1918, the absence of an institutionalized entity that would provide the official bridge to the international socialist scene and would compel Greek Socialists to intensify and standardize their discourse according to the prescriptions of the international socialist movement, as was the case with the rest of the social-democratic parties in the Balkans, determined to a great extent the low level of theoretical preoccupation. Issues that perturbed other Balkan socialist parties like the agrarian question, the problem of underdevelopment, the nature and the pace of capitalistic development, the analysis of the social composition of their respective countries were completely absent from the agenda of preoccupations of the Greek Socialists. These topics came to preoccupy Greek socialist intellectuals seriously and for the first time only within the context of the Third International: due to the lack of a socialist tradition, however, this was expressed with an even greater vehemence and an intense existential quality.

The low theoretical qualifications of the Greek Socialists are reflected in a quasi-insignificant intellectual production that not only failed to envisage a local evolution within the broader, universalized scheme of capitalistic development, but could not even provide a mechanical reproduction of the master socialist discourses of the times. At no point during the whole period of the Second International did the discourse of the Greek Socialists become compatible with international standards. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the whole legacy of the Second International remained a sealed book for the Socialists in Old Greece.⁷⁴ The above has to be relativized, of course, as much with respect to the case of the Sociologists as to the case of the Federation. The latter was linked to the Second International and carried also considerable experience in trade union organization. But the Federation came from a different and richer theoretical tradition (it

only became active in Greek politics after the incorporation into the Greek state of Thessaloniki in 1912) and cannot as such be considered to pertain to the history of socialism as framed in Old Greece. As for the former, their superior knowledge was less beneficial to the independent socialist movement than to Venizelos' modernizing project. A somehow more informed socialist agenda was offered by Gian-nios. He was not an original thinker, however, and his contribution did not go further than a simplistic reproduction of the Erfurt program, supplemented with a few demands of local "couleur" like that of the dissolution of the big estates in Thessaly and Macedonia and their distribution to the local sharecroppers. Nevertheless, this does not automatically imply a true gestation of European Marxism, as suggested by some researchers of the history of socialism in Greece.⁷⁵

It is interesting, furthermore, to emphasize that the dogmatic attitude characteristic of most social-democratic parties in the Balkans could be read conversely as the desire of "neophytes" to live up to the big, authoritative examples. In other words, dogmatism was not only a consequence of the absence of a proper social base that could be the carrier of social democracy, that is, a fleeing from reality into the world of theory, but could be read, conversely, as a sign of the desire to become compatible with international socialist norms. Even this attitude is absent from the Greek socialist movement. Rather, socialism in Greece retained something of a parochial character. The more Greek nationalism presumed its indisputable civilizational superiority, the more it became irreconcilable with the socialist ideal of a uniform world civilization, the outcome of a law-abiding process in the development of human society. Having failed to challenge the *status quo*, and because it remained politically and intellectually peripheral, socialism resembled more the spirit and the mannerism of traditional Greek politics instead of managing to imbue established political practices with a new spirit. The characters of the protagonists (the intellectuals) were not shaped by the socialist vision; rather, socialism was shaped more according to the characters of the protagonists. It comes thus as no surprise that socialist "leaders," such as Gian-nios, boycotted the unification of the socialist movement in any form other than under their leadership, and resorted to the worst kind of slander against the "Federation" by attacking its non-Greek, "Jewish socialism."⁷⁶

The claim concerning the theoretical poverty of the Greek Socialists is further substantiated by the miniscule translating activity of the socialist intellectuals, which did go beyond the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, which appeared only in 1912. For the sake of comparison, the same work appeared in Serbian translation in 1871, Bulgarian in 1891 and Romanian in 1892. A look over the border is even more convincing. The following works of Marx and Engels were translated into Bulgarian in the last decade of the nineteenth century: *The Civil War in France* (1894), *Wage, Labor and Capital* (1895), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1897), *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1898), *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1890 and 1896), *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1892), *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1892), *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Germany* (1901).⁷⁷ The level of theoretical inquiry, like the standard of translating activity, was particularly low in Greece, not only by international, but also by average Balkan standards. It comes thus as no surprise that the young communist intellectual cadres of the inter-war period viewed the lack of theoretical groundwork as an enormous deficit and went to great pains in order to overcome it. Despite the fact that it was not the deficit of theoretical foundations that provided for the weakness of the Communists in the inter-war period, as will be argued below, the real “hunger” of young communist intellectuals for theoretical literature may be seen as an inverse reflection of the absence of a socialist tradition which has been argued in this section. It was precisely this intensive soul searching that would induce intellectuals like Pouliopoulos, a convinced and versed communist, to proceed with the translation of some of the major works of Karl Kautsky in the late 1920s.

Before concluding this section, a final word is necessary on the above-mentioned demoticist movement and the involvement of the socialist intellectuals in the linguistic debate. The linguistic question had a long pedigree, dating back to an intellectual debate of the eighteenth century, before it erupted again at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, crystallizing in a form of intensified “Kulturkampf,” between two major groups, the “Demoticists” and the “Purists.” The centrality that the linguistic question acquired in Greece is comprehensible only within the context of consecutive rearrangements of the constitutive building blocks of nationalist ideology. The realization of the central position of the language in the construction of the nation

“meant as a result that the history of the language would develop into the matrix for the history of the nation.” The linguistic issue became the major battlefield in the efforts to define and regulate the content and the extent of the nation. For this precise reason, it “was not solely the field where social transformations were reflected, but also [the locus] where they were regulated both in symbolic and ideological terms.”⁷⁸ If for the Purists the archaic idiom allowed for the connection of modern Greece to the antique legacy with all the advantages that such a pedigree could sustain, for the Demoticists the popular spoken idiom was the only medium capable of promoting mass education and effectuating the educational reform needed in order to install education on a more realistic basis in accord with the modern needs of the nation state. In a period where “the nationalization of the masses” was to become the major target of nationalist ideology, the linguistic issue would logically proliferate as a primary field of concern for both state policy and state intervention.⁷⁹ “Aiming either at the nation or the society—the two notions easily conjure in the concept of the people—[the demoticist] movement found a positively predisposed audience among young intellectuals toying with radical ideas, from Marx to Nietzsche. It is comprehensible thus that as a movement it was associated with a broad range of ideological standpoints from socialism to authoritarian [anti-liberal] nationalism.”⁸⁰

Socialism got entangled with the demoticist movement in a two-year dialogue (1907–1909), centered around the reception of Sklēros’ *Our Social Issue*, and his venture to connect the social and the linguistic question.⁸¹ Socialist critique was thus fractured through the prism of the linguistic question. But since language (archaic or demotic), one way or the other, was coterminous with the essence of the nation,⁸² social critique got engulfed in the logic of the hegemonic premises of Greek nationalism and, ultimately, barely managed to challenge these discursive parameters. Sklēros and his associates managed only temporarily and superficially to stir the waters among the demoticist intellectuals: in the first place because the demoticist movement hardly represented an aberrant and subversive political alternative.⁸³ Moreover, the linguistic question had, at times, a confusing and disintegrative effect on the coherence of socialist groups, since not all Socialists shared the preference for the demotic language.⁸⁴ Ironically enough, while the demoticist intellectuals—Socialists and non-Socialists—argued in the

most introspect manner whether a social issue existed in Greece, the Goudi Uprising (1909) showed that the lower urban strata were ready to take to the streets following the "Military League" in its quest for political regeneration. Nothing demonstrates better the split in communication between the intellectuals and the social base. The program of the guilds of Athens, active in the uprising, was drawn up by the Sociologists and included issues like the reduction of taxation, the redistribution of land ownership, labor legislation and economic protectionism. The conjunction of the Sociologists with the spontaneous urban movement was a promising start, a glimmering potential of what could happen when an inspired intelligentsia connected to the vibrations of the base. The Sociologists' own political formation, the People's Party (*Laiko Komma*) did not last more than a year. Its intellectuals were absorbed by Venizelos' Liberal Party and became the intellectual laboratory of his social reform project. The initiative on the social issue had now passed over to the hands of the Liberals and the state.

Summing up, the generation of socialist intellectuals active in Greece until approximately the 1910s left no significant theoretical or political legacy. Socialism was not formulated as a political alternative; did not appropriate any specific, even minor political space as a political option; did not provide for any kind of theoretical tradition, and, most importantly, did not connect to the incipient "working class" movement. This was the vacuum that Venizelos very intelligently rushed to occupy, in the knowledge that the vacuum would not hold for very long. He was driven by a patriarchal liberal vision postulating internal social harmony as an indispensable precondition for his plans of external territorial expansion. Appropriating the blueprints of the Sociologists, he appeared on the political scene as the harbinger of modernity par excellence, a modernity that the socialist intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had failed to claim for themselves and the social subjects of socialism. Time, contrary to the contention of Chernyshevsky, rarely rewards the latecomers.

5. The Liberals: Progress, Expansion and Order

If one were to summarize Venizelos' project in one sentence, Nipperday's assessment of Bismarck that he was determined "to rule with the forces of modern society and not against them" seems to fall in place.⁸⁵ Venizelos showed the practical and tactical skills of Nikola Pašić and, just as his Serbian colleague, he constructed a biotic party that rose and fell following the life cycle of its founding personality. In contrast to other modernizers in the Balkans, like Stefan Stambolov in Bulgaria,⁸⁶ Venizelos was cautious about the need to preserve an aura of legitimacy for his modernizing design and legalized his every political step through popular sanctioning.⁸⁷ In contrast to several of his contemporary fellow politicians, including many of the socialist intellectuals, he showed a high degree of perspicacity regarding the vibrations from the base and reacted to problems with two formidable advantages: speed and far-sightedness. As observed by Spyros Marketos, Venizelos developed into the "prototype of a modern politician": "disposing of a deeper conception of time in comparison to his conservative foes and followers, [he] secured for the Liberals the role of the 'party of progress' and the initiative of action for the biggest part [of the period] between 1910 and 1935."⁸⁸ An agile tactician, he showed a remarkable commitment to the future, modified constantly his ideological positions, played his allies and foes against each other and managed to transform "his nervous tempo into the tempo of authority."⁸⁹

Venizelos' political repertoire ranged from radical reform to radical compromise, according to the priorities of the given political constellation. In fact, this constituted also his greatest advantage: the aptitude to act according to the exigencies of the moment rather than according to the prescriptions of absolute ideological principles. Although he was the indisputable creator and unchallenged life-long leader of the Liberal Party, Venizelos designed his profile both within and above party politics. He aspired as much to the leadership of the liberal fraction, as to his validation as a political figure of national magnitude.⁹⁰ Even though he intended his party to be a middle ground between a party

of notables and a party of principles, in the end effect he personalized politics, and welded his time in office and the inter-war period with his personality.

Nevertheless, Venizelos owed his political ascendance not only to his charismatic personality. His broad approval and uncontested popularity until the outbreak of the First World War cannot be understood without reference to the moral and political crisis that antedated his entrance to the political scene. In the 12 years between the defeat of Greece in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and the Goudi Uprising (1909), the acknowledgement of the incompetence of the old political world in living up to the expectations of the Greek irredentist agenda, coupled with a series of unwelcome events like the imposition of international financial control, the Young Turk Revolution, etc., recycled feelings of frustration, decay and stagnancy. Venizelos picked up the popular pulse and subsumed his political program under the quasi-messianic axiom of *anorthoses* (upheaval). The Goudi Uprising delivered a warning and functioned as a new political barometer. The lower urban strata became both vocal and mobile, forcing the political world to take their demands seriously, incorporate more popular themes into their political agendas and develop more populist strategies. Only a year later, in 1910, a revolt of Thessalian sharecroppers, short-lived and harmless as it might have been, indicated at mounting tension in the countryside. The message was received on time. The mood caused by “exiting from the crisis” and the program of a “new mission” were the central ingredients of Venizelos’ popularity.

Venizelos’ political program was certainly the most ambitious modernization project attempted in Greece, with pretensions to a holistic transformation of the Greek state and society.⁹¹ Social reform, guaranteeing social peace at home and expansion abroad were constitutive elements of the same philosophy and often correlated chronologically.⁹² With respect to his own party formation, Venizelos envisioned a mass, “catch-all” party, based on a broad inter-class coalition, and for this purpose his initial reforms were geared towards “partially contradictory but not irreconcilable goals”: the fortification and democratization of the state, rationalization of institutions, reciprocal concessions to antagonistic social groups, measures that provided both for economic development via the protection of big capital and for the amelioration of the social standing of the lower strata so as to assure their loyalty.⁹³

Venizelos' reform project was inspired by and modeled upon the blueprints of the Sociologists, the socialist intellectuals that initially cooperated with and were later integrated into the Liberal Party as its leftist flank. As argued convincingly by Marketos, "Papanastasiou and Venizelos cannot be examined separately. The former's reformatory socialism helped mold the latter's paternalism. In fact, it was its necessary precondition, since it prepared the labor legislation and the agrarian reform, helped Venizelos reorganize the state and functioned always as the counterweight to the powerful liberal rightwing."⁹⁴ Their projects, despite their common modernist denominator, were not identical. Venizelos implemented reformatory politics and protective legislation as part of a paternalistic, preventive design that anticipated the radicalization of the lower social strata, desired to control and engineer social processes, while simultaneously seeking to strengthen the institution of the state. For the Sociologists it signified the inventive and interventionist instrumentalization of the state in order to ameliorate the conditions of the laboring strata.⁹⁵ In the long run, the Sociologists' policy of collaboration, that is, the success of implementing their practical and immediate goals, signaled the prelude to their political failure as an independent political factor. Picking up on, formulating and articulating peasant and worker demands, they constructed a "bridge" between these layers and the Liberals. Instead of channeling social claims into an independent socialist political formation, they aided Venizelos' imposition of his political authority.⁹⁶ The exigency to reorganize, rationalize and democratize the state was the meeting ground between the Sociologists and Venizelos. However, if their reformatory socialism aimed primarily at bolstering the lower strata, their intermediation in practice resulted in the consolidation of Venizelos' intended state socialism project.

In their theoretical inquiries, the Sociologists share some common ground with the analytical positions of the Bulgarian Breads, a testimony to their reliance on reformatory socialism for their theoretical orientation. Despite similarities, the political itineraries of the two groups, though both inspired by revisionism, were markedly diverse. The Breads' dissent from orthodoxy was the outcome of the confrontation with the contradictions inherent in supplanting Marxism in an agrarian society. The inability to sustain the orthodox Marxist scheme of socio-economic evolution in the case of Bulgaria spurred their search for al-

ternative answers to the problematic of development. The itinerary of the Sociologists, whose orientation towards reformatory socialism was the result of their German academic training, was different. Moreover, and in contrast to the Broads, the Sociologists entered, almost immediately and assisted by their privileged social background, the higher echelons of politics with the intention of mediating reformatory socialism from above. Precisely for this reason, the Sociologists failed to have any impact at the base, which ultimately turned them into vulnerable and dependable allies of Venizelos. The experience of the Broads was similar in the long run. Initially drawn into collaborating with other progressive, democratic political forces as a means of ending the personal regime and restoring and democratizing the Bulgarian political system, their political emphasis shifted gradually from the base to the upper echelons of political decision-making. Their participation in the various all-party coalitions and their hesitant, yet final, endorsement of the First World War eventually compromised their political profile and reduced them to the role of a lesser and insignificant partner. Ironically enough, the Narrows were rewarded for their intransigence in the long run. Their dogmatism, initially more the cause of self-isolation than mass political appeal, paid off as the political system lost its credibility after the war. Intransigence and uncompromising politics became an advantage in a political climate characterized by defeat and frustration as well as a discredited political system, a circumstance which promoted radical political alternatives. Moreover, the Narrows had maintained and cultivated their connections to the base. Their anti-militaristic attitude, precisely like that of the Agrarians, would be painfully justified after the wartime defeat. The appeal of the Communists in the inter-war period was not the result of their grip on the proletarian base. When in 1919 the Narrows changed their name to the Bulgarian Communist Party and entered the Comintern en bloc, the party composed of 21,577 members, of which only 2,215 were industrial workers, while up to 9,421 were drawn from various bourgeois layers. The Bulgarian Communists, for the reasons explained above, commanded a broader political space than simply a working-class electorate.⁹⁷

By attracting the Sociologists and absorbing their potential, Venizelos short-circuited the first attempt to form an independent leftist fraction in Greece. He inhibited, thus, the creation of a broad socialist party—a development favored by the political atmosphere surround-

ing the Goudi Uprising—to the left of the Liberals. However, and this is the most significant point of the encounter between the Sociologists and the Liberals, the legacy of reformatory socialism was integrated into Venizelos' program and policy, providing the Liberals with a thoroughly radical, progressive and popular profile.

The Liberal Party as a political formation represented an umbrella organization, which encompassed diverse elements, covering a broad political spectrum from left to right. Venizelos reserved for himself the political space of the center, which allowed him to appear as a reconciliatory and moderate political figure, especially in times of extreme political polarization and instability as, for example, after 1928. The Sociologists remained "the brain in the background"—despite their attempt to function as independent political entity with the creation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party—and served Venizelos' purposes in multiple ways. They functioned also as a strong pole of attraction for similarly minded intellectuals, initially through the Sociological Society and later on through the Society for Sociological Research. It was precisely this intellectual network that provided the technocratic intelligentsia that formed and implemented the liberal labor policy for the greatest part of the inter-war period. The network connected through professional, friendship, and even family ties linked distinct, yet inter-related, areas such as the university, the ministry of national economy, the Labor and Welfare Department and moderate and reformatory syndicalism. Their common denominator, beyond a mutual interest in sociology, was the shared belief in the interventionist role of the state as a counter-recipe to both individualistic and revolutionary theories. The network was instrumental not only for promoting scientific social analysis, but also for introducing the corporatist ideas that became the foundation of labor policy in the inter-war period.⁹⁸

Venizelos' modernization scheme was a holistic, organic design that envisioned a thorough reorganization and rationalization of the state and society, and whose purpose was served through the creation of an institutional and legal framework regulating, in particular, the sphere of socio-economic relationships.⁹⁹ It was implemented in the first place through a series of radical reforms in the agrarian sector,¹⁰⁰ demonstrating the will of the state to "introduce a proper 'capitalistic' rationality into agriculture." This was brought about by the installation and consolidation of the small family holding; the development of

agrarian credit and agricultural cooperatives (the Agrarian Bank was founded in 1928); state supervision and commercialization of staple agricultural products like wheat, tobacco, raisins, cotton, oil, etc.; the introduction of a system of "security prices"; the intensification of agricultural production and the increased transfer of resources from the agricultural to the industrial sector.¹⁰¹ The agricultural reform package arrested the political autonomization of the countryside, which had started to gain momentum towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, particularly in Thessaly.¹⁰²

Precisely as incisive and timely were the interventions in the labor sector. Representing a state initiative rather than the outcome of pressure from below, the first legislation package¹⁰³ was introduced between 1911 and 1914, while in 1914 trade unions were legalized. The initial labor legislation was driven by a legalistic philosophy emblematic of the liberal conception of the "watchman state," with the objective "of solidifying relationships of exploitation, reducing the labor movement to its economic-social dimensions, isolating tendencies [leading] to its political autonomization, and preventing social unrest."¹⁰⁴ With the creation of the Department of Labor and Welfare, legislation was supplemented with a new institutional framework responsible for planning and executing labor policies.

Designed as an arbiter in social relationships and furnished with a superior negotiating position, the role of the interventionist state was to mediate and equilibrate diverse socio-economic interests.¹⁰⁵ It was, furthermore, to be the principal legal terrain for the articulation and negotiation of conflict, whereby legislation provided an optimal surveillance framework. The overwhelming presence of the state within Greek society was not a new phenomenon. Statism was well entrenched in Greece already in the nineteenth century. "The liberal measures amounted to a conscious redirection of the well-founded statism of Greek society towards socially responsible goals."¹⁰⁶ Through the allocation of social rights, Venizelos sought to legalize the political system and forge a broad basis of social consensus.¹⁰⁷ Correspondingly, the process of legalization gave social antagonism a legal form and oriented the labor movement towards the application of legal means in the articulation of conflict, that is, not confrontation via contention, but via the quest for the application of the law.¹⁰⁸ The development of syndicalism under state supervision was to ensure, on the one hand, the disconnection

between “the economic problems of the labor force and the political function of the working class as a collective subject,”¹⁰⁹ while reducing syndicalism to the role of a malleable and subordinate clientalist partner, on the other.¹¹⁰ Whenever the labor movement transgressed the prescribed parameters, the state reacted with repression, and even physical suppression of syndicalist rights. The policy of the “carrot and stick,” that is, an interchangeable policy of benefit allocations on the one hand and repression on the other, was practiced by most governments in the inter-war period, irrespective of political orientation. Nevertheless, Venizelos needed to solidify and sanctify his program through popular support, and his manipulative but swift intervention in social issues won him a reputation as “pro-labor” and “pro-agrarian.”¹¹¹ In spite of the fact that the Liberals were well connected to both big capital and the traditional landowners, the party was capable of sustaining a radical, progressive and socially sensitive profile, with a “sympathetic ear” towards the needs of the lower classes. Venizelos himself toyed with this profile, presenting himself as receptive to leftist ideas, as can be deduced from his words quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

While Venizelos managed to prevent the formation of a leftist party by winning over the Sociologists, he had a harder time preventing the unification of socialist forces after the incorporation, in 1913 with Thessaloniki, of the Federation into the Greek state. The first meeting of all socialist forces in the state took place in April 1915 under the auspices of the Federation. The outbreak of the First World War, which had a debilitating effect on the international socialist movement, acted reversibly as a “catalyst” on the Greek socialist scene, promoting the fortification, radicalization and finally the unification of the Greek socialist forces.¹¹² Paternalism proved to be an insufficient way to contain the radicalization of the labor strata due to the effects of the wars (Balkan and First World wars) and the October Revolution. Realizing that unification could not be prevented, and because his reservoir of obstruction policies were running out, Venizelos accepted the situation, hoping to secure an anti-socialist, Venizelist or moderate majority in the central labor organization. So, in Greece, in contrast to the broader experience, including Serbia and Bulgaria, unification of the labor movement did not take place on the initiative of the socialist parties, but was the result of a common agreement between the government and the Socialists. Venizelos’ calculations with respect to the unification

of the socialist forces were motivated predominantly through exigencies related to foreign policy. The anticipated territorial changes in the Balkans and his belief that the European labor governments would influence the peace negotiations after the First World War led him to use all means, including encouraging the unification of the labor movement and the creation of a socialist party, to secure Greek representation at the negotiating table. The interdependence of internal and external factors remained a crucial component in the strategic deliberations that stimulated the formulation of Venizelos' policy. The promotion of social policies and protective legislation in the domestic terrain coincided with considerations related to broader geopolitical configurations also in later periods, especially in 1920 and again from 1929 to 1932.¹¹³

6. The National Schism: Metamorphoses of Political Polarization

The National Schism (*Ethnikos dihasmos*) was the particular political deformation that dominated Greek inter-war politics from 1915 to roughly 1936. Triggered initially as a consequence of the disagreement between Prime Minister Venizelos and King Constantine with respect to whether Greece should enter the First World War, the schism developed into the chronic pathology that characterized the Greek inter-war political system. Venizelos considered that siding with the Entente would be the most effective way to materialize Greek irredentist claims and secure Greek sovereignty over the recently acquired New Lands in the north. The king, counting on a German victory, opted indirectly for neutrality but effectively supported the Central powers. Venizelos resigned as a result of Constantine's refusal to accept his policy but was brought back to office through an impressive electoral victory in May 1915, in effect a public sanctioning of his foreign policy. The king, unwilling to accept the result, forced the renewed resignation of Venizelos, the dissolution of parliament and called for new elections, from which the Liberals abstained in protest at royal despotism. Dēmētrios Gounarēs—appointed prime minister after the first resignation of Venizelos—rallied around him the supporters of the king and the leaders of the old parties, who had been pushed to the background of the political scene through the ascendance of Venizelos and the Liberals, to form what became known as the Popular Party (*Laiko Komma*) or, more commonly, as the anti-Venizelist block. Thus, the two hegemonic formations of the inter-war period emerged.

1916 was the year in which the crisis escalated. The king's policy of abandoning Eastern Macedonia to the Bulgarians triggered the revolt of the "National Defense," an officers' organization, in the North. Venizelos assumed the leadership of the movement and established an independent "Provisional Government" in Thessaloniki, entering the war at the side of the Entente. The National Schism was now fully in effect. Both the nation and the state were literally split in two, a circumstance that was asserted in both symbolic and geographic terms

with the establishment of two separate Greek governments, located in Athens and Thessaloniki respectively. Direct Entente intervention in the South, as a means of putting pressure on the Athens government, provoked an anti-Venizelist reaction, culminating in persecutions and mass terror against the Venizelists in November 1916. The Entente ousted the king and re-established Venizelos as prime minister in Athens in the summer of 1917. The liberal administration that followed and lasted until 1920 was based on the recalled parliament of 1915. This time, it was the turn of the Venizelists to retaliate in terror. The First World War ended with military and diplomatic successes, epitomized by the Greek occupation of the Asia Minor littoral around Smyrna (Izmir) and its hinterland. War weariness, however—Greece had been at war like all other Balkan countries almost from 1912 to 1918—led to a shattering electoral defeat for the Liberals in 1920, a *de facto* public disapproval of the continuation of the war effort. Venizelos chose to leave the country and King Constantine was returned to power through a rigged plebiscite. The anti-Venizelists resumed power, repressed the Liberals, threw overboard their anti-war rhetoric and continued the expansionist policy of their predecessors, which culminated in the military catastrophe of 1922. The response came promptly from the returning army, as the Revolutionary Committee, headed by Colonel Plastiras, overthrew the anti-Venizelist government and established itself as a military regime, allegedly above politics, but practically siding with the Liberals. In search for a scapegoat and in order to appease the explosive public atmosphere, the Revolutionary Committee court-martialed and executed the top six anti-Venizelist leaders, who were held responsible for the military disaster. It was a proper decimation of anti-Venizelist leadership. The “execution of the six” inaugurated a new round of the national schism.

Disagreement over foreign policy was the superficial reason behind the National Schism. It embodied a far more profound political struggle between the old state-class elites, those around the King, on the one hand, and Venizelos and the new emerging political elite, on the other:

In his effort to achieve the retrenchment of the conservative forces of order, the king descended into the political arena, identifying himself with one segment of the Greek body politic, thus shattering the constitutional

integrity of the Crown. The conservative and reactionary elements aligned behind the king were, by and large, unified more by their anti-Venizelism than by considerations of foreign policy ... The internally divided old elite closed ranks around the Crown as the essential bulwark of the old regime. Thus, the national crisis, precipitated by considerations of foreign policy, was in reality motivated and intensified by a domestic political struggle between the Venizelist party, an emerging political elite, and the old guard notables, who saw their entrenched positions threatened ... The struggle over foreign policy now offered the opportunity to strike against and check Venizelism, a force that had proved formidable at the poles. In other words, foreign policy was transformed into an important weapon for domestic socio-political exigencies ... The national cleavage accentuated the rift that had always existed between the liberal institution and political practice.¹¹⁴

The National Schism represented both continuity and rupture with the political era that preceded it. It represented continuity in so far as it perpetuated the two-party system of the nineteenth century, albeit in a new idiosyncratic constellation. The two antagonist blocks—the Venizelists and anti-Venizelists—although constructed around two major parties, the Liberal (*Fileleftheroi*) and the Popular (*Laikoi*), represented broad coalitions of diverse minor parties and politicians with often-divergent ideological orientations. This circumstance determined not only the external dynamic between the two blocks, but also the internal balance of power within them. The involvement of the army, which having initially sided with one or the other block progressively developed into an independent power factor, made the picture more explosive and the balances more complex, precarious and fragile. The civil political world welcomed the strength of the military as a precious political ally and leverage against the opponent. In due time, the civil political world became a hostage of the military cliques, whose *deus ex machina* interventions were motivated by allegiance, ideology, expediency, careerism and fear, and whose growing potency and militancy kept pace with equivalent developments in the rest of Europe.

The National Schism represented a rupture with the established political system of the nineteenth century, in so far as it called in question the constitutional legality achieved and consolidated since 1874. Whereas the 1909 Goudi Uprising represented a watershed in the political scene, to the extent that it brought new political figures to the front, led to a regrouping of political forces and gave rise to new politi-

cal formations, 1915 inaugurated a *serious and perpetuating crisis of constitutional legality*. Appeals to constitutional legality became a principal means of self-legitimization for both antagonistic blocks and a major weapon in discrediting the credibility of the political opponent. The Venizelists contested the double dissolution of the parliament in 1915 and the ensuing November terror, while the anti-Venizelists contested the legality of the 1917 recall of the parliament elected in May 1915, the execution of the six, the electoral law of 1923, etc. The constitutional issue escalated dramatically after the declaration of the republic by the Papanastasiou government in 1924, and provoked an additional cleavage not only between the two blocks, but also within the blocks themselves. The republican–monarchist debate was to dominate the political confrontation well into the 1930s.

The National Schism represented a peculiar form of civil war, as both sides defined and legitimized their position with reference to the well being of the nation. The Anti-Venizelists carried initially the title *ethnikofrones* (loyal to the nation), before they renamed themselves as the Popular Party. The same goes for the Venizelists, particularly for Venizelos, who anointed his policy as “the” national policy *per se*. Followers of the Liberals were elements “devoted to the nation”; on the other hand, political “deviants,” like the Socialists for example, were branded as “dangerous elements.”¹¹⁵ If the Schism was initially staged as a breach over the participation of Greece in the First World War, in the course of time it acquired multiple and complex significations, as each side redefined and redressed the polarization in new terms: Entente vs. Central Powers, war vs. neutrality, a greater, glorious Greece vs. a small, honest Greece, the father of the nation Venizelos vs. Palaiologos-successor King Constantine, good vs. evil, modernity vs. tradition, treason vs. loyalty and republic vs. monarchy. These metamorphoses of significations added ever-new semantic weight, created semantically complex and concurrently simplistic political messages, incessantly feeding and inflaming the polarization. Both sides radiated powerful images of the “internal enemy,” perpetrated by a willing and biased press that became the basic vehicle of transmission of the polarization from the top political level down to the level of the masses.¹¹⁶

The semantics of the schism were nurtured in concrete and practical terms through the abuses, the purges, and the terror practiced indiscriminately by both sides while holding office. This in its turn

deepened the schism and fed the fanaticism and the mistrust, while augmenting the fear of retaliation, as every turn in power translated into a complete replacement of personnel from top to bottom (particularly true for the army). Every violent act was portrayed and legitimized as “counter-violence,” as a defense against the violence and the illegal practices of the other side. The monopoly of violence alternated: between 1915 and 1917 the Liberals were persecuted; between 1916 and 1920 the tables were switched. Between 1920 and 1922 the Liberals became again the subject of persecution; between 1922 and 1923 the anti-Venizelists were the victims. In the 1930s, both blocks even resolved upon an artificial recycling of the schism as an instrument to retain hegemony and control centrifugal tendencies within one’s own block and constituency.¹¹⁷ The Schism proved useful for political mass mobilizations and was indeed the mechanism that effectively distorted and consequently converted social dissatisfaction into the established bipolar political channels. The inter-war period witnessed some of the greatest mass mobilizations in modern Greek history: mobs engaged in all kinds of ritualized political practices, from the burning of effigies to symbolic stoning.

As pointedly observed by Gunnar Hering, all “the preconditions for the Praetorian society of the inter-war period had fallen into place: a general mobilization of all social forces and institutions, which, without any minimum consensus over the rules of the conflict, used all means that came to their disposition. The degree of mobilization and participation was higher than the degree of political institutionalization and socialization.”¹¹⁸ The social pathology of the age was perpetuated through a constant interaction between politics and perceptions.¹¹⁹ The National Schism acquired progressively the dimension of a “civil war,” generating collective identities and solidifying fractional consciousness, that is, the “us” against “them” mentality, shared memories of common struggles or unsettled issues, and exposure to violence. As observed by George Mavrogordatos, “in Greece these phenomena [were] deeply affected by a series of traditional social values and, for this purpose, acquired a supplementary emotional weight and sharpness.” The National Schism cut vertically through the entire Greek society and all forms of social relationships. Collective experiences and confrontations functioned formatively as collective shocks.¹²⁰ The acknowledgement of collective fractional responsibility was often the price to be paid for

the retention of cohesion.¹²¹ Whereas the Schism functioned as the major political cleavage and the principal source of polarization in Greek society, it conversely had a precariously stabilizing effect on the fluid and fragile political landscape. Moreover, it became a self-fulfilling instrument: it legitimized violations of legality (encroachments on the syndicalist movement, pogroms, etc.) through the “legal” conditions created by a “civil war.”

The dynamic of the schism was further determined by the fact that none of the two fractions could claim numerical preponderance. The incapacity of the political parties to cope adequately with the cumulative problems of the inter-war society as well as the insufficient socialization capacity of institutions have been emphasized by Gunnar Hering.¹²² The National Schism also blurred the political, alias ideological, “couleur” of the two main actors, that is, it had a deforming effect upon a traditional typological understanding of what constitutes opposite political/ideological fronts, such as the classical concepts of “left” and “right,” for example. Who represented the left and who represented the right in this precarious war? Whereas initially the Liberals saw the party as occupying the “right” of the political spectrum and expected to face a bellicose “left” (which explains also the “preventive” attitude of Venizelos), the Schism altered this traditional political constellation, bringing about a blurring of ideological trenches. Moreover, while the political game was fought out intentionally and pointedly on the basis of political confrontation, the social policies of the two blocks showed remarkable similarities. Not only were the policies of the predecessor retained, but they were, in cases, even extended or claimed as one’s own making. The polarization and the antagonism following the National Schism, and the social mobility characteristic of the inter-war period, were the principal motivations for the perpetration of the corporatist philosophy and policy inaugurated by the Liberals. As argued by Antonis Liakos, “independent of implementation, the social mission of the incessantly disbursing state, as a means for its legitimization, prevailed in the inter-war period as a common ideology of all forces in the political spectrum. That is, it became an integral rhetorical element of the way of practicing politics at the time.”¹²³ Both blocks practiced complementary politics with respect to social issues, a circumstance that was dictated not only by the well-entrenched philosophy of etatism, but also by the desire to avoid alienating sections of the social

body out of fear of the political cost. The political expediency resulting from the logic of the bipolar antagonism dictated that political rather than social or economic criteria should decide electoral preference.¹²⁴

Despite its predominantly political character, the Schism naturally entailed social dimensions. It represented, in the first place, a reaction of conservative political elements threatened by the socio-political change brought about by the policies of the ascending Venizelist elite. However, as the confrontation trickled down to the masses, "its initial causes were refracted," and the electorate split into two camps with fixed and entrenched views, where factors like kinship ties, local traditions, etc., helped crystallize political allegiances.¹²⁵ Initially, during its most expansive irredentist period, Venizelism represented a coalition of the Greeks of the New Lands and the Diaspora that confronted Old Greece and the ethnic minorities in the north. After the caesura of 1922, Venizelism drew its electoral strength from a coalition of the newly arrived refugees, who made up the most loyal stronghold of Venizelism and in the end determined electoral outcomes through their massive presence the electoral game, along with the Greeks of the New Lands. Venizelism was also an inter-class alliance, headed by the business bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeois strata and the landless peasants, who along with the refugees were the beneficiaries of the agrarian reform. Anti-Venizelism represented a counter-class alliance, headed by the old state class, along with landowners and diverse financial elements, and the urban and rural petty-bourgeois strata of a pre- and anti-capitalistic orientation.¹²⁶ But overall, the National Schism functioned as a "mighty conservative mechanism," inhibiting the autonomous entry of the working and peasant populations into the political arena. The political cleavage cut vertically through the social, short-circuiting the autonomization along class lines. This represents also one of the major reasons for the limited success of pure class parties like the communist or the agrarian.¹²⁷

7. “The Promise of the Impossible Revolution”

The failure of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) to develop into a considerable political factor in the inter-war period is a broadly acknowledged fact. Moreover, there is general consensus among scholars of the inter-war period as to the certitude that the KKE failed to win over the working class and its electoral allegiance. The consensus goes even further as to the generic reasons that led to this deficit connection. It is attributed, in the first instance, to the “dogmatic discourse” of the Communists and their choice of political “sectarian isolation.”¹²⁸ The majority of the workforce sided either with Venizelism or anti-Venizelism, while the Communists failed to break the hegemony of the two bourgeois blocks. In other words, the Communists’ failure to win over the working class is credited exclusively to their own shortsightedness and dogmatic intransigence. Furthermore, according to Mavrogordatos, the KKE’s failure to attract the refugees was also due to the party’s inappropriate policy and slogans, while the “compulsive fixation on a rigid system of standard and largely arbitrary class categories left little room for the refugees *as such* in its official propaganda.”¹²⁹ Hering’s evaluation is similar. After the Asia Minor catastrophe, the “self-isolated” party leadership was unable to integrate the latent revolutionary disposition of the masses, patently directed against the state, the authorities and the regime.¹³⁰

The most challenging recent interpretation of the KKE’s policy in the inter-war period is provided by Angelos Elefandēs, from whose book the title for this section is drawn.¹³¹ Elefandēs’ convoluted argument is probably the most extensive attempt to come to a comprehensive understanding of the “failures” of the KKE in the inter-war period. As proclaimed by its suggestive title, Elefandēs sets out to explore why the “promised revolution” was indeed impossible. Before examining his argument, which will be presented in detail in what will follow because it represents a good summary of the KKE’s inter-war policy, Elefandēs’ contribution should be first located within the Greek and international historiographical landscape.

As regards the Greek historiographical context, Elefandēs' rebukes the commonly held view, whereby the KKE was simply an instrument of Comintern machinations and interventions. He confronts successfully the "conspiracy theory," whereby Comintern interventions imposed dictates and throws the ball back to the Greek Communists by arguing that Comintern intervention in Greek affairs only effectively occurred after 1931. Nor did the "21 conditions" for admittance to the Comintern turn the KKE to an obedient instrument of the CPSU. All considered, Elefandēs' evaluation on the influence of the Comintern on the KKE is positive, at least for the period from 1918 to 1925/1930. The Comintern assisted the Greek Communists in "avoiding the path of social democracy" and espousing the principles of revolutionary socialism. "If Communist theory was not adapted to Greek conditions, that is, if the general concepts of Marxism were not cultivated by the Greek Marxists so as to describe and conceptualize Greek reality, this [circumstance] is related to the structural insufficiencies of the Greek working class and the Greek intellectuals." The situation changed at the end of the 1920s when internal struggles in the USSR and the preponderance of Stalinism led to the establishment of an appointed leadership and the adaptation of a hierarchically constructed party model. From that moment onwards the intervention of the Comintern was harmful and arrested the natural development of the KKE. Elefandēs also deals effectively with the official KKE narrative, whereby the consecutive exclusions and changes of guard within the party were an indispensable precondition for the creation of an effective and disciplined internal party mechanism. From the official KKE standpoint, the protracted "bolshevization," completed only in the early 1930s, naturally and ultimately turned the KKE into a truly revolutionary party.¹³²

The international historiographical debate on the bolshevization process evolves around two major conflicting positions. The first stance, the view "from above," claims that all policy was dictated from the higher echelons of the Comintern, where local Communist parties were nothing but obedient sections and executive organs, with little or no autonomous handling space. The bolshevization of the Comintern "was inherent in the 'Twenty-one Conditions' and was thrust upon reluctant Communist parties under the combined weight of the Russian power struggles and the dictates of Soviet foreign policy ... the campaigns of the CPSU against 'Trotskyites,' then 'Zinovievites'

and finally 'Bukharinites' inevitably disfigured the internal regime of the Comintern and national communist parties resulting in bureaucratic centralism, ideological monolithism and a concomitant lack of political independence."¹³³ The second position, the view "from below," ascribes local communist parties a voice and room for maneuver. It regards the bolshevization "from above" thesis to be an oversimplification and seeks to examine national conditions conducive to bolshevization, understood as "an interactive process with exogenous and indigenous pressures co-mingling to produce subtle variations from country to country."¹³⁴ This line of interpretation emphasizes the significance of local factors, and Elefandēs' approach tends obviously towards this second exegetical option. It was the KKE's own insolvent politics, its inability to adapt Marxism meaningfully to Greek conditions and develop an appropriate, that is, "authentic" Marxist discourse that were the principal reasons for its failure. From the 1930s, the picture changed as the KKE became a petty mirror image of the CPSU in that it broke any substantial contact with the party base and in general, lacked originality.

As already mentioned, for every researcher of the history of the left in Greece, the 1940s and the development of a powerful and popular communist-led resistance movement is the watershed that *volens volens* imposes its weighty shadow on everything that preceded it. Hind-sight becomes almost automatically the prism through which we have to read the previous period. The temptation, of course, is as great as it can be misleading, just as it would be, for example, to attribute the relative success of the Bulgarian Communists in the inter-war period to their peripheral status in the pre-First World War period. History is not necessarily an additive or accumulative process. Almost ironically, the researchers of the history of the left in the inter-war period are standing precisely where the Greek Communists stood in the inter-war period in that they face the same questions and dilemmas. The social picture was dynamic; the masses were mobile and the situation "revolutionary" enough, so why didn't they manage to capture it? And indeed, precisely these questions preoccupied the Communists of the inter-war period as well. And like the Communists of the time, historians seek answers of an interior and inward nature, that is, they seek to establish what the Communists did wrong. The answer, for the historians as much as the inter-war Communists may be sought and found in the discourse and

the policies of the KKE itself. The boundaries between the subject and the object of inquiry are absolutely congruous.

Examining Elefandēs' argument in more detail, he locates the major problem in the functioning of the KKE in the fact that with the radicalization of the new guard that took over the party after 1922 and effectively pushed for its bolshevization, the party was effectively deprived of its founding members, the old and experienced guard that was organically connected to the working class. In its desire to lead the road to revolution, the party moved massively to the left, depriving itself of its experienced members and integrative personalities. In the name of "proletarian purity, the KKE ignored its own history, a phenomenon that from that moment onwards, has kept repeating itself."¹³⁵ This was the case not only in 1922–24, but also in 1926–27, and again in 1930–31. The new communist cadres that came back from the front in 1922 (the veterans) "behaved like Robespierres but without the French Revolution." So in the first place, the Communist Party negated its own history by removing the old guard and by moving spasmodically leftwards, while, in addition, failing to develop an appropriate and relevant "genuine communist" discourse to address Greek circumstances and catch the pulse of societal dynamics. In 1928, after the return of Venizelos and the electoral losses suffered by the KKE, there was a new reshuffling in the party leadership, which upheld the ideology of economism and the belief in the eminent collapse of capitalism.¹³⁶ The ensuing confrontation between two conflicting wings paralyzed the party in 1929, and the checkmate was resolved through the nomination of a completely new leadership by the Comintern. The newly nominated leadership that took over in November 1931 ended effectively the two-year-old debate and signified the full attunement with the Comintern line.

Elefandēs' principal thesis is thus: in the decade from 1918 to 1928, "a big game was played and lost." In 1918, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece (SEKE) started the "dialectical process" of producing a communist party with the main aim of connecting the working class with Marxist ideology. However, this endeavor failed and the majority of the working class, despite its bellicose predisposition, remained oriented towards bourgeois ideologies. After the crisis of 1922, when power was literally on the streets, the SEKE did not perceive the massive ruptures in bourgeois politics and did not strive to properly de-

tach and relegate the masses into an autonomous political space. The subsequent generation of bolshevizers constructed a mental revolution, after the party's chances were already lost. The conflict between the two generations (founders and bolshevizers) was a conflict between two philosophies: on the one hand was the old guard as carriers of a local revolutionary tradition and, on the other, the bolshevizers who strove for the importation of foreign models. The former was controlled, meticulous and sought a broad popular base; the latter was characterized by an asymmetrical activism with respect to its capacities and aimed at creating a party of select and organized communist cadres.¹³⁷ From 1931, the party broke with the practice of democratic centralism, developed hierarchical traits, led by new "fabricated" personnel that were elevated even higher above the basis they were supposed to lead.

In the 1930s, the KKE followed an undifferentiated policy towards all bourgeois parties, indiscriminately declaring them fascist. The party cultivated isolation and broke all bridges with political forces with which it shared similar political goals. It thus failed to extend the social and political basis of the left. While, from 1934, it pursued the "united front" line, it chose negligible factors as political allies and ignored, for example, the Venizelist left wing, which corresponded to an equivalent of a social-democratic party. This policy was revised in the summer of 1937 with the adaptation of the policy of national unity of all anti-fascist forces. The predominant political philosophy of the KKE in the 1930s was economism, the belief that the current period represented a linear continuum of the crisis of capitalism that would lead inevitably to its destruction. The party expected that the deterioration of the economic conditions of the lower social strata would drive them automatically to revolution. The KKE's philosophy of economism arrested the political mobility of the masses to the initial point of departure, failing to transform this spontaneous radicalization into political consciousness and socialist ideology.

In essence, the KKE lost the battle of the intellectuals and, as such, missed out on the possibility of extending its social basis to the masses. While the blind alleys of Greek bourgeois politics were pushing the masses to adopt leftist views, the KKE did not synthesize and organize the elements liberated by the movement of the masses by the class struggle itself. It measured everything according to the standards of an ideology that did not arise from the experiences of the proletariat.

Indeed, Elefandēs is right in one respect, the history of the SEKE/KKE in the inter-war period indeed appears dramatic: the story of continuous ideological confrontation, expulsion and changing of the guard, and incessant splits into minor, ineffective and peripheral groupings were all signs of the incessant frustration and the political feebleness experienced by the Communists in the inter-war period. But why? In the first place, the process of perpetual division within the KKE was not the reason for its feebleness, but rather the other way around. As witnessed also in the case of the Bulgarian Social Democrats in the beginning of the twentieth century, feebleness as a political force facilitated and perpetuated divisions. In a period where Communists considered policy a matter of adherence to the appropriate ideological principles, which were also considered to be the guidelines for the appropriate policy to be followed, it is only logical that every ascending group would credit its predecessors for the hitherto political failure of the party. The generation of the bolshevizers (1922–1924) credited the previous generation with adopting an all-too reconciliatory attitude and with theoretical inaptitude; the departing founding generation would credit the bolshevizers with mental revolutionism, etc. The communist literature of the inter-war is saturated with writings of reciprocal recrimination. These discourses are noteworthy not so much for the informative content they provide, but for the way they illustrate the frame of mind of the Communists of the period, that is, they map rather well the lenses through which they perceived and translated politics as a war of ideological positions and convictions. The same discourses are rather good indicators of the intensive soul-searching process within the party, and the inability of consecutive leaderships to find a distinct political space for the KKE within the political landscape of the inter-war.

The SEKE/KKE was painfully conscious of going through a kind of permanent “organic crisis.” Divisions and splits were usually culminations of these perceptions of crisis, frequently connected with the frustration accompanying electoral defeats; in a certain way, they were also attempts—successful or unsuccessful—to overcome the crisis. The communist discourses of the inter-war period demonstrate a particular cyclical pattern: attempts to overcome a crisis were followed by changes of the guard, and then renewed crisis. Logically, each specific argumentation was corroborated with arguments and positions drawn from the international menu of the Third International. This was the context

and the framework within which the Greek Communists had to operate in the inter-war period. Indicative of the ideological oscillations is the fact that many party intellectuals often revised their initial positions over the course of time, moving from arduous revolutionary positions to more moderate views. So one cannot but agree with Elefandēs that the problems of the KKE were predominantly of a local nature and had less to do with Comintern intervention.

But was the problem of the Greek Communists their inability to "authentically" translate Marxism to local conditions? Or their incapacity to adjust a foreign model to Greek circumstances? Or a dogmatism and sectarianism that inhibited them from developing a popular discourse so as to detach the laboring strata from the grip of the bourgeois parties? Was the voluntarism inherent in the bolshevik model a hindrance to the "proper" understanding and evaluation of local conditions? And moreover, if, as maintained by Elefandēs, the major problem consisted in the content of the KKE's message, and not in the structural set-up of the inter-war period, as will be argued below, then how can we explain the gradual ascendance of the party during the mid 1930s, when it became most monolithic and dogmatic after its "Stalinization"? In order to understand the "tormented" history of the KKE, it is necessary first of all to connect it to its prehistory.

The Socialist Workers' Party of Greece was founded only in 1918. The absence of an institutionalized entity up to that moment signified, in the first place, the lack of a homogenized, standardized socialist discourse, and, secondly, the absence of the legacy of the Second International in Greece. The SEKE was formed by diverse elements and constituted from the moment of its inception a precarious balancing act. This was for two basic reasons. Firstly, because it brought together elements of diverse ideological orientation, and secondly, and most importantly, because the foundation of the party coincided chronologically with a slow paradigm shift in the international socialist movement—a paradigm shift that was to be solidified with the foundation of the Third International in 1919. The bankruptcy of the Second International and the victory of the October Revolution constituted the two ends of the gray zone in which the Greek Socialists would oscillate in their first attempt to connect to the international socialist ambience.

The SEKE was not the carrier of a social-democratic tradition. Although it might be an exaggeration to claim 1918 as the *Stunde Null* of

Greek socialism, the statement is not far from the truth. For most socialist parties, the split in the international socialist movement divided a solidified local social-democratic tradition into two political entities, a social-democratic and a communist one. In the Greek case, the absence of a previous social-democratic tradition, the lack of solidified and long-standing theoretical standpoints and the uncertainty associated with the rapid changes in the international scene, saw the movement of the party as a unified entity into the new chapter of division in the history of the international socialist movement. Whereas for most socialist parties the split of the International would eventually demarcate two political entities corresponding schematically to a left and a right, in Greece diverse elements were hosted under the same roof which ensured, from the beginning, that internal currents would rock the party intermittently between left and right. Long-lingering differences between reformist and revolutionary branches, which had already troubled the Second International and which came into open confrontation with the creation of the Third, were to be reflected in the case of Greece directly and for the first time within the SEKE. And whereas the bolshevization process was often practiced more or less in communist parties which had already formed, in Greece bolshevization was a process that involved the party in its entirety and for precisely these reasons was a more "dramatic," oscillating and protracted process.

Uncertainty, ambiguity and reluctance characterized the rite of passage into the Third International. Accepting the organic connection to the Third International in 1920, and then retreating, in 1922, to declaring its decisions as non-binding "documents of historical significance," before entering the Comintern as a full member in 1924, when the bolshevization of the party began, did not alleviate inner-party debates, however. The party polyphony was, as already mentioned, the result of the coexistence of elements of diverse ideological orientation but also the enormous difficulties of the Greek socialists to position themselves ideologically in the complex setting of both the international socialist and the local political context. The fluidity that characterized the two contexts (the international/change of paradigm and the local/National Schism) determined to a great extent the initial ideological uncertainty of the founding generation of the SEKE.

In general, the groups that pushed the party towards more radical leftist positions represented younger generations of intellectuals, stem-

ming predominantly from the youth movement, often the student milieu, who were logically more enthusiastic about the bolshevik experiment. This was the case with the Communist Union organization, but also with the veterans' and the Marxist Archive. From this perspective, the push towards the bolshevization of the party could be read as the outcome of a generation gap or as a conflict between different generations of socialists. Greece was not a singular case; both in France and Italy the ideological conflict over affiliation to the Comintern was among others a generational conflict.¹³⁸ Moreover, in Greece the younger generations represented more sophisticated and well-educated cadres with a stronger and more emphatic claim on theoretical grounding, a circumstance that corresponds well not only with the student milieu, but also with the bolshevik model of the enlightened, theoretically consolidated leading elite. Education went hand in hand with militancy. In their eyes, the founding generation was too willing to compromise. It might be considered a false evaluation of the situation, but certainly not a coincidence, that the veterans', upon their departure from the KKE (1927–28), would locate the failure of the party in the lack of well-trained and theoretically consolidated cadres. A different logic but a similar evaluation motivated young Communists, initially integrated into the KKE, to create the Marxist Archive.¹³⁹ They opted for the model of a clandestine bolshevik organization, with a predominant emphasis on educational not political work.

The drive towards the left, however, was more complex than a mere generation gap. The generation that pushed for the bolshevization was also the one that became adults in wartime, participated in the Asia Minor campaign, experienced the 1922 catastrophe and was logically radicalized even further by the course of these dramatic events. The radicalization of young communist cadres was thus not only due to ideological reasons, but kept tune with broader processes of radicalization within Greek society. If the masses were radicalized by the exigencies of the National Schism, war-exhaustion, consecutive military putsches and socio-economic conditions, this broadly-shared experience of radicalization was read and translated by the young communist cadres through the prism, narrative and imaginary of bolshevism. The voluntaristic character of the ideology they espoused did not hinder them from understanding the social nature of the radicalization of Greek society, but rather from conceptualizing and accepting the National Schism as the formative context of their period.

But one could argue also from the reverse perspective: What were the chances of an alleged legalistic option when the big political game was played out as a major crisis of legality between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists? What would have been the chances of a legalistic socialist version of modernity against the mighty legalistic, reformatory modernist vision proposed by Venizelism? The conflict between the two generations was thus not, as Elefandēs maintains, a conflict between two philosophies, one rooted in the local revolutionary traditions and an imported, yet unadjusted, foreign model. As Theodoros Nikolopoulos has appropriately observed, the KKE could barely have avoided bolshevization, an international process that was experienced by almost all social-democratic/communist parties.¹⁴⁰ Elefandēs shares this view.

An additional local reason conducive to bolshevization was the absence of a local social-democratic tradition. The lack of both the theoretical and political legacy of social democracy logically elevated bolshevism—the dominant and apparently successful paradigm of the times—to the status of the most plausible alternative. In other words, Greece was no Germany, where a long-established tradition of reformatory socialism would continue, even after the fiasco of the First World War, to command a sizable contingent of working-class allegiance. The lack of such a tradition was also the principal reason for the lack of an ideological compass within the party. It is misleading to represent the founding generation as solid Social Democrats, to speak as Elefandēs does, with popular elements and with long-standing connections to the working class, who would have been capable of transforming the social-democratic party into a “robust” political organism, amalgamating into one both the party model of the Third International and some kind of local revolutionary tradition. Such a local socialist revolutionary tradition did not exist, and even had it existed, the outcome of the bolshevization process could not have been anything else but a break with this tradition. Rare were the cases, as in Bulgaria, where a certain “lineage” to the pre-First World War Narrows could be maintained. What in most countries developed when social-democratic parties split into two, meant in Greece, for reasons already explained, the slow removal—voluntary or forced, for better or worse—of the reformist elements, a process carried out by and large between 1920 and 1924. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that it was in fact the founding

generation that experienced some of the strongest ideological oscillations (e.g., Georgiades).

Thus, it is significant to detach the inter-party quarrels from exegetic approaches that seek in these discourses the principal reason for the KKE's failure. The inter-party controversies were an expression of the frustration of consecutive leaderships over the failure to catch the popular pulse and find a distinct ideological profile. They were formulated as discourses on principle, but it was not principles that made the difference. The Communists sought in principles a model which would help them systematize the rules of the political game, but unfortunately the inter-war political game in Greece was one without rules. The inner-party controversies were played out, of course, in relation to the dictums of and the developments within the Third International, as competing groups interpreted broad guidelines according to their own local exigencies. Exemplary are the diverse interpretations over the change of Comintern policy in late 1922, which proclaimed the end of the offensive phase of the labor movement and inaugurated the tactics of the united front and the policy of the worker and peasants' government. The reformist-inclined SEKE group (the founders) read the new policy as the need to interrupt revolutionary activity and to put the party through a long "legal" preparatory and organizational phase, necessitated by the fact that the capitalistic system had managed to partially stabilize itself. On the contrary, the communist-inclined group considered that capitalism was still going through a crisis that did not cancel the need for revolutionary activity. Whether these inter-party intellectual debates and the diverse interpretations on the temporary course of capitalistic development really made such a great difference on the ground is questionable.

The chances of sustaining a successful social-democratic party in inter-war Greece were also meager. They were annulled by the presence, on the one hand, of the Liberals and their reformatory policies and, on the other, by the existence of the KKE and its more radical political course. The social-democratic option seems to have been crushed in the in-between. The Social Democratic Party created in 1931 as collaboration between various socialist veterans and syndicalists of a reformist orientation did not succeed politically.¹⁴¹ At the same time it is an exaggeration, to credit the generation of the bolshevizers solely with unrealistic, mental hyper-revolutionism as Elefandēs has. It

should not be forgotten that it was precisely this generation that organized the “Veterans’ Movement” (*Kinēma Palaion Polemiston*), perhaps the only successful, though short-lived attempt of the KKE to connect to the popular base.

The Veterans’ Movement founded in Greece in 1924 sought to organize war veterans and victims according to the model of the International Veterans’ Movement founded in Switzerland in 1920. Its program contained a strong anti-militaristic tenor, particularly effective after the 1922 catastrophe, as well as a forceful social component geared both towards a rural and an urban audience. It castigated poverty, disproportionate taxation and unemployment, sought the elimination of exploitation, state recompense for unemployed soldiers and their and their family’s’ speedy reabsorption into the labor sector, land distribution to the refugees, a curtailment of superfluous state expenses, state pensions the victims’ families, appropriate housing free of charge for the invalids, etc.¹⁴² If the early Socialists in Greece had missed the chance to appropriate the anti-war discourse for the left—it is worth recalling that despite the anti-war propaganda practiced by the Federation, the anti-war discourse in the period of the First World War in Greece was principally appropriated by and identified with anti-Venizelism—the veterans’ movement managed temporarily to capture the anti-war protest wave and consolidate it as an ideological component of the left.

The Veterans’ Movement subsided however after the mid 1920s, for several reasons. While veterans’ associations were dissolved during the Pangalos dictatorship in 1925, long-term factors seem to have had a more corrosive effect. Land reform and distribution seem to have pacified the demand for holdings, while the elimination of the threat of war and the rehabilitation of soldiers into Greek society made the anti-war tenet somehow irrelevant. The social vision proclaimed by the veterans’ program was neither unrealistic nor extravagant; on the contrary, it was very much fashioned to address the concrete and urgent needs of the lower social strata. Therefore, it was not the social categories proposed by the Communists that were completely out of tune with “reality.” Rather, it appears to have been the other way around; the political imaginary of these social strata was not activated by the Communists’ discourse. The reasons are multiple: neither the social subject of the “peasant” or “worker” had really been constructed or formulated as a

political subject by a socialist discourse before; the intellectuals of the nineteenth century had contributed nothing in this regard. On the contrary, Venizelos had developed a modern paternalistic class discourse that in an adequately abstract manner incorporated the identities and aspirations of the lower social strata within a national discourse. In addition, it was a discourse that embedded social identities within the status quo. Moreover, there existed a de facto dissonance between the degree of organization of these strata and the Communists' discourse. The labor movement was in its preliminary phase of organization, just starting to develop its organizational skills and acquire self-confidence. Time factors determined this dissonance between an incipient labor movement and the framework of the Third International. Moreover, the socialist and the labor movement in Greece had not developed symbiotically.

The foremost quandary for the Socialists/Communists of the inter-war period was to command their own, autonomous political space. Contrary to the assertions claiming that the Communists became mired in their own dogmatic discourse and, for this reason, barely managed to challenge the two bourgeois political blocks, the opposite seems to have been the case. The KKE's permanent crisis and ideological oscillations between moderate and radical positions was caused precisely by the Communists' attempts to locate themselves in the political quicksand of the inter-war period. The problem was all the more formidable since the cleavage between the two blocks (Venizelists–anti-Venizelists) was not formed as a clear-cut ideological confrontation between, for example, a political left and a political right. And moreover, both blocks followed similar corporatist policies, which undeniably blurred the contours of the political scenery. From this perspective, the most effective and plausible reason for the leftwards swing of the bolshevizers appears to have been the necessity to position the KKE ideologically within the political landscape of the inter-war period and, in particular, to differentiate the communist from the Venizelist profile.

The Communists were faced with a potent political force, committed to progress and comprehensive reform. Despite the fact that Venizelos was pushing for the bourgeois transformation of Greek society, he had demonstrated a commitment to innovation and had earned a reputation for speed and effectiveness, political dexterity, diplomatic skill, and far-sightedness. He embodied the successful expansion of Greece

as a result of the Balkan and First World wars, and he had adopted rather early on—much earlier than the Socialists—a social profile allowing for varying shades and interpretations. He had created a catch-all party, which addressed simultaneously various social strata while trying to keep their emancipatory strivings within controllable limits. Despite setbacks and incomplete reforms, he was agile and, moreover, he was “radical.” Almost ironically, Venizelos was engaged in a form of “revolution,” albeit a very different one from that envisioned by the Communists and in the name of a very different social vision. But he could not be associated with a traditional *status quo*. He modified his profiles, engaged in a class discourse and strove for a golden middle ground without allowing himself to be associated with extreme positions. He was as modern as it could get.

While the Communists were playing the political game, religiously devoted to principles and considering their failure to be related to whether they observed the appropriate ideological axioms, Venizelos approached politics with the strategic and anticipational instinct of a tactician. His main advantage consisted in the fact that he had managed to catch the political pulse of a section of the electorate, devoted to his personality, be it for his nationalist, social, reconciliatory or modernist profile.¹⁴³ The inter-war electoral results demonstrate clearly that the KKE did not reap votes of commitment, but rather protest votes, while the leakage was evidently taking place at the expense of the KKE. Having received 4.38 percent in the 1926 elections, in 1928—upon the return of Venizelos to the political scene—its share sunk to 1.41 percent. Characteristically, the best electoral result for the Communists in the inter-war period (July 1935, 9.59 percent) was achieved when the Liberals abstained from the poll. Perhaps the strongest indicator of the leakage from the KKE to the Liberals is testified by the fact that, upon the death of Venizelos and the demise of the Liberal Party, the Asia Minor refugees turned almost *en masse* to the Communists. Of course, fissures in the alliance between Venizelos and the refugees had appeared in the early 1930s, but the dissolution of that particular political chemistry took place only after his departure from the political scene.

At this point, Gramsci’s definition of “hegemony” is particularly illuminating for understanding the difference in the concept of “revolution” as understood by the Communists and as applied by Venizelos. Gramsci’s starting point was that, due to the greater complexity of

Western societies, socialist revolutions in the West could not, as in Russia, be limited to attacking and taking over the state. He departed from the point that those seeking the establishment of a new social order could not limit themselves to traditional politics, that is, to simply apply strategies and tactics that would lead to the seizure of state power. The requisite tasks were more complex and, most importantly, they required the "establishment of a new kind of consensus." Consensus, however, was not a static condition, but a "battlefield" of contending conceptions, while the decisive factor to obtaining hegemony was to become the force that dominated the battlefield. Gramsci called the straightforward storming of the state the "war of movement or maneuver," which he rejected it as strategy of power, since it was, in essence, a strategy that did not allow for winning decisive positions. The "royal road to power" was the "war of position." And this was a strategic war. Of course, Gramsci envisioned it as a strategy related to the organization and participation of the masses, but the most crucial component was tactical. It consisted of accurately understanding the enemy, since in positional war, "the siege was reciprocal." Moreover, it was significant to conceptualize the transmutational character of the war of position, since the enemy has simultaneously carried out his own "passive revolution," that is, "the gradual modification of his power system by reorganizing hegemony. This reorganization is achieved by 'molecular changes, which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes.'" ¹⁴⁴ The example used by Gramsci was the victory of Cavour over Mazzini. As summarized by Donald Sassoon:

Thus in Gramsci's view, the Italian Risorgimento was won by the moderates (i.e., Camillo Cavour and Piedmont) because Cavour, in adopting the principles of the war of position, understood not only his own role but also the role of that of his opponent, Giuseppe Mazzini, who, on the contrary, "does not seem to have been aware either of his own or Cavour's." Cavour was able to absorb elements from the Mazzinian camp by modifying his strategy and marshalling international support. Cavour's superiority did not rest only on his greater understanding of the national terrain, but also of the international relation of forces (in so far as Italian unification was made possible by the interplay of European power politics) and the fact that, after 1848, Europe had entered a period in which the war of movement would only lead to defeat. ¹⁴⁵

Significant for our purpose is the notion of the constant rearrangement of hegemony, the tactical thinking in a war of position and moreover the notion of “revolution as a process,” not as a singular act, but as the “establishment of a new hegemony” based on consensus, where there is no “single act of seizure” but a perpetual war of position.¹⁴⁶ And it is precisely the combination of these factors, along with his constant drive into the future, that gave Venizelos a political advantage. An advantage that allowed him to capture and dominate the mass imaginary on modernity, in a certain way confining it within the parameters of classical political respectability, contrary the more expressionistic modernizing alternative of his communist adversaries.

It should be emphasized that the principal building blocks of the communist discourse, as well as the theoretical analysis they developed, did not vary significantly from the broad blueprints and the general guidelines of the Third International. Several of the aspects criticized by Elefandēs, like the Communists’ underestimation of bourgeois forces, was not particular to the Greek Communists, but a more general attitude of inter-war communism. Bulgaria is a characteristic example. Both the Bulgarian Communists and the Agrarians underestimated the strength of the bourgeois world, preferring rather to regard each other as the major obstacle to their respective ascendance to power. For a long time, the Bulgarian Communists held the conviction that the real threat in Bulgarian politics came neither from the bourgeois parties nor from the active military groups, but from Stamboliiski. While before the First World War, the left had exhausted its forces in a fruitless struggle between the narrow and the broad fraction, after the war and until the mid-1920s, the struggle would continue as a competition between the Agrarians and the Communists. The incapacity to differentiate adequately between democratic and reactionary forces was shared by most Communists. In Germany this became evident during the Kapp Putsch in 1920 and the years preceding Hitler’s ascent to power, when German Communists seemed incapable of appreciating the significance of a military-reactionary attack on a non-communist bourgeois government.

Moreover, the capacity of socialist/communist parties to capture a political pulse should not be attributed solely to the appropriateness of their discourse. Structural elements and country-specific political constellations contributed also to the capacity or incapacity of socialist/communist parties to appeal to sections of the population and com-

mand a particular political space. Here again, the case of Bulgaria is rather indicative. The steady growth of the Narrows and later Communists cannot be understood independently of the losses resulted from the Balkan and First World wars. The price to be paid in terms of casualties, poverty and inflation was enormous. The lost wars and the protracted socio-economic crisis swung the political pendulum to the benefit of the anti-war parties, the Agrarians and the Narrows. The skyrocketing of the party membership of the Narrows is quite indicative: in 1912, it composed of 2,500 members; in 1915, the year of Bulgaria's entry into the war, it rose to 3,400; in 1919, it had reached 21,000. The membership had increased sevenfold in comparison to 1915.¹⁴⁷ The aftermath of the war found Bulgaria indeed in catastrophic conditions, "crushed by inflation,¹⁴⁸ gripped with food shortage, burdened with a reparation's load of £50,000,000, and saddled with over 276,000 refugees from the lost territories."¹⁴⁹ In the 1919 elections, the Communists emerged as the second strongest party with 47 Sübranie deputies and 119,000 votes, twice as much as the Narrows had received in 1913. The policy of permanent opposition, hardly effective in the pre-war period, was bearing fruit in this new constellation. In the 1920 elections, the pendulum swung still to the benefit of the anti-war parties. Between them, the Agrarians and the Communists commanded 60 percent of the vote: 347,000 for the former and 182,000 for the latter. While the Bulgarian political elite that had almost unanimously endorsed the war managed to survive physically, it was politically discredited, which explains the predominance of left-wing class parties.

Greece in 1922 could be considered the equivalent of 1918 Bulgaria; the outcome was, however, very different. The political elite considered responsible for the catastrophe—the anti-Venizelists—was decimated, and the tension created by the defeat aired through the attribution of guilt upon a scapegoat. The socialists had protested against the war, but never achieved a monopoly on the anti-war discourse. And, finally, 1922 did not signal the end of National Schism, but rather a renewed round of the old feud, now additionally loaded with the presence of newly arrived refugees, who were firmly on the side of Venizelos. The political constellations were indeed very different. Moreover, the Liberals quickly embarked on a refugee rehabilitation program, a process that did not proceed without setbacks and tensions between the old inhabitants and the newcomers, but was by large rather suc-

cessful when the fact that this involved over a million of refugees is taken into consideration. Furthermore, the republican–monarchist debate dominated consequent political developments, well into the 1930s. The republic was proclaimed in 1924 on the initiative of the left-wing Liberals and Papanastasiou. And once again it was the old socialist guard of the Sociologists that pushed the Liberals into more trenchant political positions than that of a traditional liberal profile. The consolidation of the republic and the nation, now enclosed within the borders finalized in 1922, became the programmatic points of Venizelism from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s. Not even the republican issue was the exclusive domain of the communist left, in contrast to Bulgaria, for example, where it was a long-standing demand of the Agrarians and the Socialists. The problem did not lie with dogmatism, but rather in the fact that the initiative of action was in other hands. The Communists were competing with a foe that was using, under another name and with a different project in mind, a whole series of themes from the leftist ideological arsenal. The Communists could not but lag behind.

Also, Elefandēs' much-emphasized "mental revolutionism" of the generation of the bolshevizers deserves closer consideration. In the first place, it should be stressed that a voluntaristic attitude towards politics and particularly towards the issue of revolution, was again no Greek particularity. It was a commonplace theme in the mind frame of most Communists of the period and was properly the inheritance of the success of the October Revolution, as two abortive revolutions in Germany and one in Bulgaria in the early 1920s clearly testify. Again, Bulgaria provides a good case for comparison. The miscalculations and quasi-suicidal voluntarism of the Bulgarian Communists did not seem to inflict harm on the party or diminish its political capital in the inter-war period. Why? The Bulgarians not only let several "objectively revolutionary" situations pass, but they also attempted revolution when all omens were rather adverse. With the army mutinying, angry soldiers marching towards Sofia and the country in a state of chaos and convulsion after the loss of the First World War, the Narrow party remained passive and refused to assist the insurrection at Radomir, which it deemed was ultimately reactionary. It aimed solely at the establishment of a bourgeois republic, while collaboration with the Agrarians, which ultimately took over the lead of the movement, was considered an unacceptable alliance. The Narrows maintained a dogmatically

contemptuous attitude towards the Agrarians, to such an extent that they remained absolutely neutral, as the old political order, allied in the Constitutional Block, bloodily overthrew Stamboliiski in June 1923 and established the authoritarian Tsankov regime, which consequently decapitated the Communist Party itself. Reprimanded by the Comintern for their fateful passivity, which indirectly assisted the overthrow of the Agrarian government, the Bulgarian Communists defended their policy by arguing that the confrontation between the Constitutional Block and the Agrarians was in essence a struggle between two sections of the bourgeoisie. When the Bulgarians were instructed to correct this mistake and prepare for an armed insurrection in order to overthrow Tsankov and establish a Workers' and Peasants' government, the Bulgarians faithfully obeyed. It led to the abortive "September Uprising" of 1923, which brought about the suppression of the Communist Party and forced it to go underground. With the Agrarians decimated and furthermore split, and the bourgeois parties desperately fragmented—by 1926 there were, including the several splitter BANU fractions, no fewer than 19 identifiable groups within the parliament—the Communists advanced to the position of a leading oppositional force. This circumstance facilitated, at the same time, the formation of the Democratic Entente, around Tsankov, of the frightened bourgeoisie as the only alternative to communism. As maintained by Rothschild, "this polarization of political attitudes was to give the Communists a great advantage over other opposition groups when public opinion swung again to the left in the Popular Front era of the 1930s and the anti-Nazi struggle of the following decades. Tsankov's terror facilitated this success by preventing the moral isolation of the Communists."¹⁵⁰

Such a polarization of political attitudes between a left and right did not exist, however, in Greece. Rather the masses were "dancing"—or rather to use a term from geostatics—were "synchronized" to the pulse of the National Schism. This was, moreover, a polarization that cut vertically through the social texture, short-circuiting primary identifications along horizontal, class lines. This "trapped" social energy, set loose after the obsolescence of the National Schism (1936), came to full fruition during the 1940s. The condition of occupation provided a dynamic synergy of the national and social factors. The inter-war period had provided the reticent chemical laboratory for socialism and agrarianism alike. It was during this period that a proto-layer of radical

ideas pertaining to visions of social justice penetrated the countryside through the mediating function of teachers, repatriate emigrants, seasonal workers and other mediators, who functioned as intermediaries between the urban and the rural world. During the Second World War, the tangible problems of occupation and the collapse both of the economy and the pre-war state institutions led to a general radicalization of Greek society that provided the backdrop for the resistance movement. In this new context, older layers of agrarian ideology and cultural traditions of the past merged with an indefinite communist ideology, enhanced in addition by the new experiences of popular, local self-government (*laokratia*). It was this background that nurtured a collective vision emphasizing the virtues of equality, direct democracy and communal autonomy, and constituted the radical ideological incentive of the 1940s resistance movement.¹⁵¹

A final word is necessary on the inability of the Communists to address the working class and command its allegiance. It is well documented in the historiography that the communist discourse did not correlate to the social critique as articulated by the labor movement itself. The theoretical positions of the party echoed the positions of the Comintern, but had little correspondence to Greek social reality. In other words, the party of the working class could not effectively mobilize the workers or greater collectivities against bourgeois governments. Its political argumentation—particularly after the radicalization of the party in 1924—did not keep pace with the political demands of the workers' movement, and thus the communist discourse did not manage to penetrate and articulate the needs of the lower social strata.¹⁵² The above evaluation to a certain extent provides a plausible answer as to the dissonance between the Communists and the labor movement. However, the question could be carried further. Was the above-mentioned incongruence solely the result of the "expressionistic" discourse of the Communists and their inability to construct appropriate social identities? Or was it also related to broader and more generic structural problems concerning the form of labor protest, the constitution and degree of organization of the working class, the mode of social radicalization, the aspirations of the social actors, etc., in the inter-war period?

In order to connect to elements that have been already discussed in this chapter, it should be remembered that early socialism in Greece was not formulated as the ideological conjunction of the political and

economic struggle of the working class. Furthermore, the early liberal initiatives on the labor issue aimed at controlling and domesticating the labor movement, by integrating it within the legal parameters of the state. The regulation of organized, competing social groups constituted part of the broader design to modernize the economic sector. Beyond arbitration and control, liberal reformist policies aimed simultaneously at inhibiting the social struggle spilling over into political confrontation. When the dynamic of the labor movement exceeded the prescribed parameters, the state reacted with repression, through restrictive legislation, by persecuting syndicalists and socialist leaders, and by encroaching directly on the internal affairs of labor unions, either by dissolving them (as in 1923 and 1925), or by intervening actively in the nomination of new leaderships. At the same time, the state aimed at reducing labor representation to a clientalistic relationship by providing financial support to specific branches and their representatives and by attracting reformist syndicalist leaders. The result of all the above was often the adulteration of syndicalist leaderships, the eradication of democratic procedures within trade unions, and the rendering inactive of a great many unions. As emphasized by Antonis Liakos, "the syndicates were alienated from the life of the working class, and the working class did not articulate itself through the syndicates."¹⁵³

In addition, the frequent splits in the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), which mirrored the political division of the National Schism, but also the division between Socialists and Communists, further weakened the bargaining strength of the organized labor force. The outcome of all these factors was not only the loss of faith in the representativity of organized labor, resulting in low quotas of organized workers and, moreover, in a random fluidity between organized and non-organized workers. More importantly, the generic result was a weak and fragmented syndicalist movement. Thus, social protest and strike activity regularly took a spontaneous, unorganized and ad hoc character. Although the authorities frequently reacted physically to strike activity, strike demands were often satisfied through negotiations between individual occupational groups and the state representatives responsible for labor affairs. At the same time, restrictions and persecution went often hand in hand with an extension of the social role of the state. The culmination of this policy was the introduction of social security in the 1930s. The policy of the carrot and stick, practiced in-

discriminately by all governing groups in the inter-war period, and the broadly accepted philosophy of corporatism shared and practiced by the governing elites produced confusing and disintegrative results.

Moreover, the cleavage of the National Schism distorted and diluted the autonomous significance of the social factor. Social problems were not perceived in their independent dimension, but were all too often associated with the dominant political cleavage. While socio-economic problems led to spontaneous protest and radicalization, which also goes to explain the mobility and the conspicuous presence of the masses in the inter-war period, this was not the determining factor when it came to declaring political allegiance. The National Schism perpetuated a polarization built on the primacy of the political factor and the logic of emergency, which made the recycling of block solidarity an imperative. The political constantly distorted the social, and the expression of mounting social dissatisfaction—which is often taken by researchers as an indicator of the disentangling of the political polarization—did not automatically signify the ending of the priority of the logic of political “civil war.” If one were to present this as an image, the political functioned as a tight corset, constantly restraining a body of social energy trying to breathe.

However, it was not only the prevailing feebleness of organized syndicalism that provided for a weak labor movement. The Greek working class was “in the making,” slowly developing its subjective self-definition as a distinct social category, distinguishing itself from neighboring social strata, but also gradually entering into a position of confrontation with the local bourgeois strata. The social categories remained, to a great extent, fluid and were to crystallize only gradually. Fluidity signified the periodic rotation from one profession to another, from worker to craftsman to small itinerant salesman, etc., and the persistence of seasonal labor indicated that the connections between the city and the countryside remained largely intact. The formation of a permanently settled urban labor force was also a gradual process. The urban settlement of refugees accelerated its course, while, at the same time, the social baggage of the refugees, that is, their previous social status in the Diaspora communities and their integration as a first generation of workers in small enterprises, retarded the creation of the labor class. In addition, it should be remembered that the prevention of the process of proletarianization and a preference for a majoritarian

population of small owners had formed part of a long-standing state policy. For multiple reasons, such as the predominance of small-scale enterprises, the strong presence of dying professions like the cigarette-makers, etc., labor struggles proceeded in the spirit of what Thompson has coined the "moral economy," in that they aimed to reestablish a traditional conception of economic regulation, rather than within the context of modern industrial relationships.¹⁵⁴

In conclusion, the Greek socialist movement was to enter the initial stage of adulthood only in the period and within the context of the Third International. Socialist intellectuals in Greece were to achieve theoretical maturity and a certain intellectual independence for the first time within that context, as is demonstrated by the ascent of a generation of competent communist thinkers from the late 1920s onwards. As regards the Greek case specifically, it meant that the preoccupations, characteristic of earlier periods in the history of socialism (for example, the nature of capitalistic development at home, the attempt to discursively construct social subjects, etc.) were articulated through the preoccupations, discursive parameters and theoretical options offered by the Third International. If in the Bulgarian case the local digestion of the socialist paradigm was articulated as a confrontation between Marxist orthodoxy and the effects of the revisionist debate, in Greece it was presented as a theoretical confrontation between Communist orthodoxy and the Trotskyist alternative. It was the result of a belated start and a delayed maturity.

NOTES

- 1 The bill "on security measures of the social regime and on protection of the citizens' liberties," alias *Idionymon*, decreed the imprisonment of organizers or propagandists of a Communist or "similar" movement which aspired to the violent subversion of the *status quo*. It included articles banning Communist assemblies and analogous gatherings, considered "dangerous" for public security.
- 2 In 1902 there were 625 industrial enterprises in Romania, with approximately 40,000 workers. Serbia and Bulgaria each disposed of 16,000 industrial workers, active in 470 and 345 enterprises respectively. Greece composed in 1917 of over 2,000 enterprises, which employed approximately 36,000 workers. Hatschikjan and Troebst, eds., *Südosteuropa*, 122.

- 3 For a broad and general overview of the state of Greek historiography, see: Kitroef, "Syneheia kai allagē stē sygchronē ellēnikē istoriografia." On the historiography of the Greek labor movement, see: Liakos, "Ē allēlexartēsē politikon kai methodologikon proseggiseon"; and Liakos, "Ē istoriografia tou ergatikou kinēmatos."
- 4 The leading researcher and main exponent of the intellectual history of socialism in Greece is Panagiotēs Noutsos, whose monumental encyclopedic work remains the principal and unsurpassed reference oeuvre in the field. Noutsos, *Ē sosialistikē skepsē stēn Ellada*.
- 5 See characteristically: Axelos, *G. Sklēros. Stathmoi kai oria*.
- 6 Liakos, "Oi dynatotētes proslēpsēs tou Marxismou stēn Ellada, to 19o aiona."
- 7 Kitromelidēs, "Ideologika reumata kai politika aitemata kata ton ellēniko 19o aiona," 70. See also: Kitromelidēs, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*.
- 8 Kitromelidēs, "'Noeres koinotetes' kai oi aparches tou ethnikou zētēmatos sta Valkania," 57.
- 9 A further clarification is here necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings. The potency of the imaginary in nationalist ideology does not automatically translate into affectivity in the actual materialization of nationalist goals. On the contrary, it might well develop into a hindrance. By the same token, nationalist fantasies of a lesser grandeur, and precisely for this reason, propelled by a greater compensational drive, might well develop greater stamina and more pragmatic strategies and agendas in the pursue of nationalist goals. Nor does the emphasis on the potency of the imaginary imply a categorization along the lines of "good" and "bad" nationalisms. The starting point of the following analysis is that nationalism—in all cases—is by nature of its ideology a more or less exclusive and expansionist business.
- 10 Todorova, "The Course and Discourses of Bulgarian Nationalism."
- 11 Lilova, *Bŭzrozhdenskite znatseniia*, 49.
- 12 Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais*, 148–154.
- 13 See: Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*.
- 14 See: Tsoukalas, "The Irony of Symbolic Reciprocities."
- 15 For an excellent discussion of the "calamities" facing the Bulgarians in the definition of their descent, see: Lilova, *Bŭzrozhdenskite znatseniia*.
- 16 As laid out programmatically by Ioannis Kolettēs in the 1844 National Assembly, "each and every one of us contains in himself the image of [his] brilliant Greek descent." Quoted in Dēmaras, K. Th., "Tes megalēs tautēs ideas" (On this great idea) in Dertilēs and Kostēs, eds., *Themata neoellēnikēs istorias*, 46.
- 17 Maier, Lothar, *Rumänien auf dem Weg zur Unabhängigkeitserklärung*, 484.
- 18 For a comparative discussion of the legitimization techniques of the Serbian and Romanian elites, see: Mishkova, *Prisposobiavane na svobodata*.
- 19 Kitromelidēs, "Ideologika reumata kai politika aitemata kata ton ellēniko 19o aiona," 67.

- 20 Matalas, *Ethnos kai orthodoxia*, 18–21.
- 21 On Greek nationalism, see: Skopetea, *To “protypo vasileio” kai ē megalē idea*.
- 22 Koliopoulos, Ioannēs, “Lesteia kai alytrotismos stēn Ēllada tou 19ou aiona,” 167.
- 23 Skopetea, “Oi ēlles kai oi echthroi tous,” 11–12.
- 24 For an extended discussion, see: Tsoukalas, *Exartēsē kai anaparagōgē*.
- 25 There was, however, a shift in the geographical locations of immigration. The traditional loci of Western and Central Europe and the Northern Balkans diminished in significance as the emphasis in the nineteenth century shifted more towards the Eastern Mediterranean, that is, the Asia Minor littoral and Egypt.
- 26 Ibid., 30.
- 27 Chatzēiosēf, “Ē belle epoche tou kefalaiou,” 310–311 (emphasis mine). Banking, for example, became a privileged domain for the investment of expatriate capital and experienced an even greater expansion at the turn of the twentieth century. New offensives were undertaken in collaboration with foreign credit institutions in connection to the intensification of Western investments in the Eastern Mediterranean. Characteristically, the Bank of Athens, founded in 1894, showed spectacular growth, particularly after its collaboration in 1904 with the French Banque de l’Union Parisienne (BUP), a *de facto* recognition by French investors of the leading role of Greek businessmen in the Ottoman Empire and in the Middle East generally. The Bank of Athens expanded rapidly beyond the confines of the Greek Kingdom into the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. At the eve of the Balkan Wars it was in possession of 41 branches and agencies, 29 branches and 3 agencies of which were outside Greece. The alliance of the Bank of Athens with the BUP allowed for the creation of one of the strongest financial groups, consisting of a series of satellite companies and financial institutions.
- 28 Tsoukalas, *Exartēsē kai anaparagōgē*, 242–243.
- 29 Mouzelis, *Modern Greece*, 145.
- 30 See: Exertzoglou, *Ethnikē tautotēta stēn Konstantinoupolē*.
- 31 Migratory roots followed basically three itineraries. One was oriented towards the Diaspora communities of the Eastern Mediterranean, a second was directed towards Athens, the kingdoms’ capital, and a third followed the transatlantic route of the international proletariat to the United States. The nineteenth century witnessed the multiplication of Greek communities and the creation of compact Greek settlements in the big urban centers of the Mediterranean periphery, a process that reached its height in the period between 1840 and 1920 and its end decisively in 1922. Characteristically, in 1920 the five biggest Greek settlements were Athens, Istanbul, Izmir, Alexandria and Thessaloniki, whereby only two were within the confines of the Greek Kingdom and Thessaloniki was incorporated only in 1912; see: Tsoukalas, *Exartēsē kai anaparagōgē*, 292–314; for a detailed treatment of

the Greek communities in Asia Minor, see: Anagnostopoulou, *Mikra asia 19os aionas—1919*. Massive emigration to the United States started in the 1890s and came to a halt in 1924 due to restrictive measures on immigration. Between 1890 and 1920 about half a million Greeks from the Greek Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire settled in the United States, a relatively small number in comparison to other nationalities, but a proportionately large percentage considering the population density in Greece; see: Kitroef, “Yperatlantikē metanasteusē,” 127.

32 Petmezas, “Agrotikē oikonomia,” 61–85.

33 The efficacy of state protectionism from a macro-historical perspective is advanced by Georgios Dertilēs in view of the distribution of the tax burden in the modern Greek state. He argues that the Greek state progressively reduced direct taxation on the peasantry, shifting the main burden of direct taxation onto the shoulders of lower income urban layers, while retaining the traditional under-taxation of the upper social strata. The trend was accompanied simultaneously by a shifting of the emphasis from direct to indirect taxation. Dertilēs comes to the conclusion that although the taxation system remained economically ineffective, the tax reforms became an effective political instrument, which along with other factors managed to keep the strength of the agrarian constituency high and static. See: Dertilēs, *Atelesforoi i telesforoi*. A similar argument for the case of Serbia is advanced by Michael Palairot. Reasons of political expediency motivated the Radicals to maintain low direct taxation on the peasantry as to assure their electoral support; see: Palairot, “Fiscal Pressure and Peasant Impoverishment.” The fact that taxation was good reason for peasant mobilization is testified by the Bulgarian case. The reintroduction of the tithe gave the signal for a country-wide mobilization as taxation affected horizontally the whole agrarian population. Apparently, the Bulgarian state financed its growing expenditure by relying heavily on peasant taxation at least until the turn of the century.

34 The “demoticist movement” represented one of the two contending sides in the linguistic debate that erupted at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century in the Greek intellectual scene. The linguistic question had a long pedigree dating back to eighteenth-century intellectual debates and evolved around the issue of which version of the Greek language was appropriate as the official language of the Greek Kingdom. It was fought between the “Demoticists,” the adherents of the popular, demotic language, and the “Purists,” the adherents of the more archaic linguistic, *katharevousa* version.

35 Noutsos, *Ē sosialistikē skepsē stēn Ellada*, vol. 2, part A, 22–32.

36 Ibid., 33.

37 Stavridē-Patrikiou, *O G. Sklēros stēn Egypto*, 22.

38 Ibid., 23. In her treatment of the demoticist movement, Patrikiou falls prey to the same assumptions as Noutsos. She overrates the radical character of the movement by taking at face value the Demoticists’ own self-definition.

- 39 Haupt, Georges, "Naissance du socialisme par la critique: La Roumanie."
- 40 The first generation of Populists/Socialists in Romania were not of Romanian ethnic origin. The majority belonged to the Russified gentry of Bessarabia and found refuge in Romania after the unsuccessful "going to the people" movement of 1873–74.
- 41 Kalafatēs, "Thrēskeutikotēta kai koinonikē diamartyria."
- 42 Oikonomou, "Ta ellēnika politika reumata prin apo ton El. Venizelo."
- 43 The issue of political clientalism has received adequate attention in Greek historiography and remains a heated issue among different historiographical schools. For an overview of the various theoretical approaches to the problem of clientalism, as well as a local case study in the region of the Peloponnese, see: Lyrintzēs, *To telos ton "tzakion,"* particularly 27–55. For a counter discussion, see: Chatzēiosēf, "Dēmokratia kai pelateiakes sche-seis." Indeed, the phenomenon of *partisanstvo*, that is, the adulteration and circumvention of formal procedures, the proliferation of informal bonds and the exchange of favors, appears to have been a constituent part of most political systems in the Balkans as part of the symbiotic relationship between traditional society and the new forms of organizing and exercising power provided by the nation-state. The existence of *partisanstvo* does not, however, necessarily imply the existence of a solidified clientalistic system with an integrative character. If one were to make an argument for a Greek particularity here, this could only rest in the combination of ingredients that provided for such a stability: an open and participatory political system, the greater social stratification of Greek society, the options for and technologies of employing and maximizing social and cultural capital as well as resources, the alliances crafted between local traditional and the new emerging commercial and political elites, the presence and perseverance of strong local elements, the balances reached between political elites and the crown; that is a combination of factors and balances reached between the micro-, meso- and macro-(national) level. Tentatively, it could be argued that such stability was not reached by all political systems in the Balkans where *partisanstvo* prevailed. Bulgaria appears as an interesting contrasting case here: the preeminence of the king as the chief catalyst of political balances led to the abovementioned fragmentation of the political landscape and the creation of increasing numbers of political contenders, a circumstance that probably did not allow for the creation of stable and durable clientalistic networks. Moreover, the manipulation of the political system by the king and the political elites' complete dependency upon his political favor invalidated the necessity for politicians to develop long-term strategies as political patrons and construct the necessary, pyramid-like relationship to the electoral base. This is most probably one of the reasons that go to explain why it was easier to organize the electorate along a horizontal axis, as manifested through the creation of "class" parties like the Agrarian Union, for example. On the contrary, it could be argued that Bulgaria represents something of a case of "dysfunctional clientalism." That

is, a clientalistic system out of balance, favoring only particular political groups and thus having, in the long run, an alienating and disintegrative impact on the majority of the population.

- 44 Liakos, "Oi dynatotētēs proslēpsēs tou marxismou stēn Ellada," 411.
- 45 The process of the incorporation of intellectuals into the state mechanism has been treated theoretically by Michels, "Historisch-kritische Untersuchungen zum politischen Verhalten der Intellektuellen" in *Masse, Führer, Intellektuelle*, 197. "Die übergrosse Nachfrage nach Beamtenstellen, die aus diesen Verhältnissen entspringt, bewirkt die Entstehung einer Masse von intellektuellen Proletariern, die grossen numerischen Veränderungen unterliegt. Denn von Zeit zu Zeit sieht sich der Staat, durch das unablässig wachsende Angebot in Bedrängnis geraten, gezwungen, die Schleusen seiner bürokratischen Kanäle zu öffnen, um seinem Beamtenkörper einige neue Tausende von Postulanten einzuverleiben und sie so aus gefährlichen Gegnern in eifrige Beschützer und Klienten zu verwandeln."
- 46 Lyrintzēs, *To telos ton "tzakion,"* 163.
- 47 On Kallergēs' bibliography see: Noutsos, *Ē socialistikē skepsē*, vol. I, 188–190. Kallergēs was active between 1890 and 1904, when he retreated to his homeland Crete and dedicated his energies to the island's unification with Greece.
- 48 See: Sklēros, *To Koinoniko mas Zēmēma* (Our social issue), in Sklēros, Georgios, *Erga*, Athens: Epikairota, 1977, 81–137.
- 49 See: Vasilikos, Petros (pseudonym of Chatzopoulos, Kostas), "Sosialismos kai glossa" (Socialism and language) in Stavridē-Patrikiou, Rena, ed., *Dēmotikismos kai koinoniko problēma*, 209–216.
- 50 Alikaniotēs, *Dēmētrios Gounarēs*, 78–86.
- 51 For an excellent and exhaustive treatment of reformatory socialism in Greece, centered around the personality of Alexandros Papanastasiou as the leading figure of various socialist formations, the Sociologists, and also the later "Workers' and Peasants' Party," see: Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epoche tou*.
- 52 The 1909 uprising was led by a group of junior and middle-ranking officers (the Military League), disappointed by the inefficiency of the government and its inability to live up to the country's irredentist aspirations. The coup confronted the government with demands for long-overdue reforms and enjoyed considerable popular support. The officers did not adopt a confrontational line against the government and having reached a political impasse, they invited Venizelos, at that time active on Crete, to take over the leadership. The Goudi Uprising enjoys divergent interpretations in Greek historiography. The major contention evolves around whether or not it was a class uprising. One historiographical school has canonized Goudi as a "bourgeois revolution," that is, as a military intervention that brought the ascending commercial bourgeois strata to the political limelight and thus paved the way for Venizelos and his project of bourgeois modernization. 1909 is according to this interpretation a conflict between two fractions of

the bourgeoisie. The ruling state bourgeoisie and the politically ascending commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, represented by the Liberal Party. The second position contests the class character of the uprising, arguing that Venizelos' political ascendancy and along with him the rise of new social strata, was not foreseeable during the uprising. The fact that upon his ascendancy to power, Venizelos embarked on an ambitious project of liberal modernization, assisted by ascending social layers was not predictable. On the first position, see: Mavrokordatos, George, *Stillborn Republic*, 121. On the second position, see: Hering, *Die Politische Parteien in Griechenland*; see also: Dertilēs, *Koinonikos metaschēmatismos kai stratiotikē epemvasē*; also: Andreopoulos, George, "Liberalism and the Formation of the Nation-State," 194–200.

- 53 The Romanian Social-Democratic Workers' Party was created in 1893. It was dissolved in 1900 and founded anew, as the Romanian Social Democratic Party, in 1910.
- 54 The girls' school in Volos was a pioneering teaching institution that attempted to implement innovative teaching techniques, among them the usage of the popular (demotic) language as the language of instruction. See: Charitos, *To Parthenagogeio tou Volou*.
- 55 Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epochē tou*, 88–89.
- 56 The official act that triggered the National Schism was the disagreement between Venizelos and King Constantine on whether Greece should participate in the First World War. Venizelos advocated the entry of Greece on the side of the Entente, while King Constantine officially supported neutrality, but was essentially in favor of the Central Powers. The National Schism will be treated in detail below.
- 57 Leonaritis, *To ellēniko sosialistiko kinēma kata ton proto pagkosmio polemo*, 63.
- 58 Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epochē tou*, 322–323.
- 59 As quoted in Gkolias, *To ergatiko kinēma stēn Ellada kai o Kostas Chantzopoulos*, 462. See also: Noutsos, *Ē sosialistikē skepsē stēn Ellada*, vol. II, Part B, 33.
- 60 Stavridē-Patrikiou, "Ē endaxē sosialiston dianoumenon sto kinēma tou Venizelismou" (The incorporation of socialist intellectuals into the Venizelist movement) in Mavrogordatos and Chatzēiosēf, eds., *Venizelismos kai astikos eksyghronismos*, 318–319.
- 61 Sklēros, *Ta sygchrona problēmata tou Ellēnismou* (The contemporary problems of Hellenism) in Sklēros, *Erga*, 332–335.
- 62 On the "Federation," see: Dumond, "La Fédération Socialiste Ouvrière de Salonique à l'Epoque des Guerres Balkaniques"; Marketos, "Ē 'Federation' kai ē edraiosē tou Ellēnikou socialismou"; Liakos, *Ē sosialistikē ergatikē omospondia Thessalonikēs (Federation) kai ē sosialistikē neolea*; Dumont, "A Jewish, Socialist and Ottoman Organization: the Worker's Federation of Thessaloniki" in Tunçay and Zürcher, eds., *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire*, 49–75. A very one-sided and ideologically biased treat-

ment of the history of the “Federation” is presented in *Ē sosialistikē organosē Federation Thessalonikēs 1909–1918*.

- 63 This could of course be disputed in the case of the Sociologists, who came up with a comprehensive program of agrarian reform, but as repeatedly emphasized, their program did not come to the benefit of an independent organization of the base, but rather to Venizelos’ state reform program.
- 64 Giannios, *O propagandistēs tou sosialismou*.
- 65 Ibid., 6 (emphasis mine).
- 66 Ibid., 7.
- 67 As quoted in Gkiolas, *To ergatiko kinēma stēn Ellada kai o Kostas Chatzopoulos*, 297–298. The reaction of Chatzopoulos was the same. Writing to Giannios, he confirmed: “I have rethought everything. Respect towards myself inhibits me from getting involved with the scoundrels of the STETE (*Syndesmos ton Ergatikon Taxeon Ellados*, the Association of the Greek Working Classes), not even in the form of a confrontation. *The propaganda of socialism according to foreign standards is still premature for the Greek worker. The first thing he needs is to do is to read and write and receive some ethical lessons. It is my conviction now that I got to know the reality closer.*” Quoted in Kordatos, *Istoria tou ellēnikou ergatikou kinēmatos*, 170. The STETE was founded in 1908 on the initiative of Platon Drakoulēs, who a year later created the Greek Socialist Party (*Helleniko Sosialistiko Komma*). Nikos Giannios emerged from this organization and, in 1911, went on to found the Socialist Center of Athens (*Sosialistiko Kendro Athinon*).
- 68 Quoted in Noutsos, *Le Marxisme Europeen*, 87.
- 69 On the labor movement in Volos, see: Koliou, *Oi rizes tou ergatikou kinēmatos kai o “Ergatēs” tou Volou*.
- 70 See: Birman, *Formirane i razvitie na bŭlgarskiia proletariat 1878–1923*.
- 71 See: Bogdanovic, *The Serbian Labour Movement in the Period 1903–1914*.
- 72 Socialist intellectuals acted rather as petty chieftains, claiming the imaginary monopoly of the leadership of the working-class movement, and consuming their energies in petty vendettas of little significance. Notably, such was the self-fashioning of people like Giannios and Drakoulēs. In essence, they entertained petty cliques of “faithful” followers as a justification for their self-acclaimed role as leaders of the socialist movement in Greece rather than for the purpose of the practical application of the principles of socialism or the dissemination of socialist theory.
- 73 I consider the thesis that First World War and the national question contributed to a proper clarification of ideological fronts within the Greek socialist movement and contributed to a split into a reformatory and a radical wing, *accurate cum grano salis*, see: Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou*, 22. Admittedly, the war issue provided for the creation of fronts and the radicalization of intellectuals, but only on a short-term basis. After the war and at the moment of the creation of the SEKE in 1918 the points of rupture had subsided. Illustrative of the confusion and the fluidity in the ideological landscape are the protocols of the first constitutive congress of the

SEKE, where also “reformists” and nationally-inclined socialists like Giannios participated. Giannios attacked the “Federation” on the grounds that it represented the Greek “Broad” Socialists. Alluding to the Bulgarian split, he accused the Federation of reformism, while he appropriated for himself the “Narrow” label, that is the radical left wing. Giannios’ departure from the first founding congress was not due to major ideological differences, but rather due to the fact that he could not dominate the scene any more. see: *To Proto synedrio tou SEKE*.

- 74 It is a true riddle how experienced researchers of socialism in Greece analyze the theoretical production of Greek socialist intellectuals with euphemistic conclusions like the following: “the time from 1907 to 1925 represents a period that can not simply be reduced to the history of the Internationals, where consecutive paradigms succeeded each other by canceling what was before, but it appears rather richer in [theoretical] tendencies.” Noutsos, *Ē sosialistikē skepsē stēn Ellada*, vol. II, part A, 22. A similarly optimistic evaluation is shared also by Stavridē-Patrikiou: “It is obvious that the unification of the Socialists within the demoticist movement and around Sklēros carries *all the characteristics of Marxist orthodoxy*, as articulated in the international socialist movement predominantly through Kautsky and Plekhanov. It was transmitted to Greece via the Sklēros-Plekhanov channel and assisted [further] via [the channel of] Chatzopoulos and the German social-democratic movement” (emphasis mine). Stavridē-Patrikiou, *Dēmotikismos kai koinoniko problēma*, 89.
- 75 See: Noutsos, *Nikos Giannios*. Giannios advanced a list of demands, but never produced anything like a treatise on socio-economic conditions in Greece. Moreover, the texts he translated are of secondary significance, second-rate caliber and usually limited to short articles. He never translated anything from the central canon of Marxism.
- 76 Leonarītēs, *To ellēniko sosialistiko kinēma kata ton proto pagkosmio polemo*, 257–260.
- 77 Source: Birman, *Formirane i razvitie na Būlgarskūia proletariat*, 164.
- 78 Liakos, “Ex ellēnikēs eis tēn emon koinēn glossan,” 965.
- 79 Ibid., 968.
- 80 Ibid., 968.
- 81 On the topic, see: Stavridē-Patrikiou, *Dēmotikismos kai koinoniko problēma*.
- 82 On the ideology of the Demoticist movement, see: Tziovas, *The Nationalism of the Demoticists*.
- 83 A strand of the historiography on the linguistic question has readily taken up the demoticists’ self-created dissident pedigree, see characteristically: Frangoudakē, *O ekpaideutikos dēmotikismos kai o glossikos symvivasmos tou 1911*.
- 84 Kordatos, *Istoria tou ellēnikou ergatikou kinēmatos*, 160–161. It was only later, from approximately the inter-war period, that the struggle for the establishment of the popular language would be associated exclusively with the left.

- 85 Nipperday, *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol I, 361.
- 86 For a standard biography, rather favorable to the personality of Stambolov, see: Duncan, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria 1870–1895*.
- 87 Venizelos proved his maneuvering skills already at the beginning of his political career. Brought into the Greek political scene by the Military League that led the Goudi Uprising of 1909, Venizelos was called to find a way out of the political crisis precipitated by the military coup. Venizelos, however, turned down the offer to govern through unconstitutional means, only to return triumphant the next year on the wave of a legal electoral victory. He managed to reverse the anti-royal sentiment and the quest for a constituent assembly by rehabilitating the king and providing only for a revision of the constitution, rehabilitating thus a course of gradual and peaceful integration.
- 88 Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epochē tou*, 8.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 90 Venizelos' ambition to canonize his political profile as a supra-partisan figure of national magnitude is testified by his political self-fashioning. It goes to explain his passionate involvement in politics, but also the "gracious" way he would remove himself from the political scene, after electoral defeats for example, treating politics with an air of disinterest, always willing however to intervene in critical moments when called to office in order to "save" the nation. Whenever he removed himself physically from the political scene in Greece, he remained conspicuously present.
- 91 Precisely for this purpose it has been canonized by Greek historiography as the apogee of "bourgeois modernization" (*astikos eksyghronismos*), a term used to designate not only Venizelos' political performance, but the whole era, which he in one or the other way dominated; see: Mavrogordatos, "Venizelismos kai astikos eksyghronismos" (Venizelism and bourgeois modernization) in Mavrogordatos and Chatzēiosēf, eds., *Venizelismos kai astikos sksyghronismos*, 9.
- 92 Andreopoulos, George, "Liberalism and the Formation of the Nation-State," 209–212. Quite illustrative is the following quotation that summarizes to the point the internal and external facets of Venizelos' policy: "The deputy ... who considers that a non-socialist state should practice a non-socialist policy does not realize how close lies the danger ... [H]e does not recall that an authoritarian state [Germany] ... implemented full labor legislation so as to provide workers with everything possible by the standards of contemporary civilization, while at the same time it intimidates this same working population ... [so] as to confront the ideas of social democracy ... [W]hen he thinks that the strength of bourgeois order is to remain blind to the *ever-present danger, which in the twentieth century rises from below, a danger that can be confronted only in one way by anticipating convulsions—through the satisfaction of the rightful claims of the working classes*, the outcasts of society ... I am forced ... to declare the truth, where big land ownership

like in the case of Thessaly antagonizes the major state economic interests, as well as the agricultural, economic, political, human and national [interests]; private property will have to give in, by accepting compensation, so as to allow the state to fulfill its major tasks ... *What is of importance is not the victory of the personal ego, but the triumph of the idea. It is the success of the national goals which this state has to fulfill. In any case, I will be the safest pillar of order and the status quo. But I do not wish this status quo to remain static. I do not desire it in its old arrangement, so that it might suddenly collapse in shambles. I want it to follow progress, adapting to everyday circumstances, so as to support this state to fulfill its supreme mission.*" Quoted in: Stefanou, *Politikai ypothēkai*, 320–321 (emphasis mine).

- 93 Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epochē tou*, 21.
- 94 Ibid., 13.
- 95 Ibid., 100–102.
- 96 Ibid., 235.
- 97 Rothschild, Joseph, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*, 95.
- 98 Liakos, *Ergasia kai politikē stēn Ellada tou mesopolemou*, 215–217. Also Liakos, "Apo kratos fylax eis kratos pronoia?" 171–172.
- 99 A rational interventionist economic policy was promoted through the creation of the Ministry of National Economy, the Bank of Greece and the Agrarian Bank, the creation of commercial, industrial and agricultural chambers, the legalization of trade unions and the creation of agrarian cooperatives.
- 100 The agrarian reform announced shortly after Venizelos' ascendance to power is to be credited as the labor reform inaugurated in the same period to the reformatory designs of the Sociologists. In the first place, it involved a concerted effort to create a competent institutional framework in charge of agricultural affairs, as indeed materialized through the creation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce in 1910 and with the later foundation of an independent Ministry of Agriculture in 1917. A seminal step towards land reform was achieved through gradual land distribution, a process inaugurated around 1914 as a strategy to secure the newly acquired lands in the north. The National Schism and First World War became catalysts in the further development of the agrarian issue. Radical agrarian reform was inaugurated by the Venizelist "Provisional Government" in 1917 with the twofold aim of winning the support of the peasantry and solidifying Greek presence in war-stricken areas. In 1917 the forced expropriation of big estates was given a legal basis. The most trenchant phase of the agrarian reform was inaugurated after 1922, when the massive influx of the Asia-Minor refugees made their settlement and appeasement an absolute imperative. This radical and extensive phase of land distribution aimed to forge national cohesion through the creation of an extended layer of small owners so as to fortify bourgeois hegemony and avoid proletarianization.
- 101 Damianakos, *Le paysan grec*, 221.

- 102 The initiation of agrarian reforms had an appeasing effect on the countryside. It is illustrative that the concerted efforts of the Thessalian deputies, the first concerted parliamentary group representing explicitly agrarian interests, disintegrated as an independent political pressure group as soon as the issue of big land ownership was settled legally. In 1912 they turned their electoral allegiance to the Liberals.
- 103 It provided for a series of laws regulating Sunday rest, safety and hygienic conditions in the workplace, women's and children's labor, working hours, etc.
- 104 Liakos, "'Apo kratos fylax eis kratos pronoia?'" 171.
- 105 Liakos, *Ergasia kai politikē*, 103–104.
- 106 Andreopoulos, "Liberalism and the Formation of the Nation-State," 209.
- 107 Leonarītēs, "To ellēniko ergatiko kinēma kai to astiko kratos 1910–20" (The Greek labor movement and the bourgeois state 1910–1920) in Veremēs and Dēmētrakopoulos, eds., *Meletēmata gyro apo ton Venizelo kai tēn epohē tou*, 81.
- 108 Liakos, "'Apo kratos fylax eis kratos pronoias?'" 174.
- 109 Ibid., 176.
- 110 Intrinsic to the paternalistic rational was the desire to emasculate the syndicalist movement and retain the advantage of initiative in the organization of the labor movement. For this purpose Venizelos sought either to inaugurate the creation of workers' centers, as for example in the creation of the Workers' Center of Thessaloniki as a counterweight to the already existing Federation, or by seeking to secure a Venizelist leadership in already existing workers' centers such as in Pireaus, Athens and Heraklion.
- 111 See: Kordatos, *Istoria tou ellēnikou ergatikou kinēmatos*, 231. Also Benaroya, "Afēgēseis gia ton Venizelo" (Accounts on Venizelos) in Benaroya, *Elpides kai planes*, 59.
- 112 Leonarītēs, *To ellēniko sosialistiko kinēma*, 11–12.
- 113 Seeking the benevolence of the League of Nations, either in order to sustain Greek territorial claims as in 1920 or in order to receive financial support as in 1929–1932, Venizelos accepted and promoted the reformatory incentive coming from the League's affiliate, the International Labor Organization. This was the background for the introduction of social security in Greece. Internal exigencies, like the Asia Minor campaign, the flow of immigrants and the search for loans, determined the willingness to accept external influences. See: Liakos, "O Eleftherios Venizelos kai to diethnes grafeio ergasias" (Eleftherios Venizelos and the International Labor Buro) in Mavrokordatos and Chatzēiosēf, eds., *Venizelismos kai astikos eksygychronismos*, 268.
- 114 Leon, *Greece and the First World War*, 3–4.
- 115 Hering, "'Epikindynoi sosialistai', 'ethnikofrona ergatika stoiheia' kai o 'afelēs agrotēs,'" 187–206.
- 116 Papadēmētriu, "O typos kai o dihasmos 1914–1915," 389–438. The anti-Venizelists presented Venizelism as the conspiracy of big capital, a

- political force carried by a mighty exploitative plutocracy. The Venizelists for their part instrumentalized the king's failure to react to the Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia in order to portray the Anti-Venizelists as national traitors, resolving to a powerful ideological association, whereby the external invader was equated with the internal enemy. Images were additionally communicated in a language that made use of traditional religious symbolism and representations that stimulated the imaginary via an organicist, pseudo-medical biological vocabulary.
- 117 Venizelos made use of this technique in the 1930s through a systematic reactivation of the memories of the 1915–1922 period. Although he was not necessarily against it, Panagēs Tsaldarēs (Gounarēs' successor to the leadership of the Popular Party) refused to recognize the republic, which had been proclaimed by a fraction of the Venizelist block, fearing for the unity of his own block.
 - 118 Hering, *Die Politischen Parteien in Griechenland*, vol. II, 785.
 - 119 "Generations, under the influence of the family and [their] surroundings, [under the influence] of political propaganda and the myths of both camps, got used to regarding the Greeks being split as two nations—the Venizelists and the anti-Venizelists. Historical experience separated them like a deep trench, out of the muddy waters of which rose the steam of hatred. With respect to the parties and the voters, the notion of the two nations is only accurate to a limited degree: *their self-perceptions justify this categorization*. However, this popular notion was itself a product of the polarization, constructed through chain identifications of distorted pictures of homogeneity and coherence of one's own or of the other camp. Anyone who was against the war came under suspicion of being against parliamentary democracy and against national interests, and being for the king, the kaiser, the Bulgarian archenemy and for violence against the Liberals. The other side saw in Venizelists the violent agents of the Entente, who were against the king, who destroyed the unity of the nation, smashed the traditions and jeopardized the existence of Greece and the integrity of the state. The social pathology of both sides is demonstrated precisely by the fact that in order to retain coherence they differed less and less as much in their political practice as in their propaganda. The more one stigmatized the simplified opponent and identified with one's own block, the higher the degree of polarization and the solidification of prejudices." Ibid., 786 (emphasis mine).
 - 120 Such was the experience created by the November Terror of the anti-Venizelists, the "crime" of the execution of the six by the Venizelists, and the attempted assassination of Venizelos in 1933.
 - 121 It was manifested in the failure of the leadership of both fractions to denounce, curb or punish extremist initiatives perpetrated by their adherents. Characteristically, not only did Venizelos fail to react to the Plastiras coup following the 1933 elections, they made a point of defending it. Equally, Tsaldarēs proved unwilling to allow a full investigation of the

attempted assassination of Venizelos, a circumstance that rekindled passions between the two fractions.

- 122 “As a consequence political institutions could only partially catch, canalize and mediate the activity of mobilized groups. The permanent legitimacy crisis aggravated the situation. As long as it was not resolved, it came up repeatedly, so that *immediate problems were related all too often to decisions of principle like republic or kingdom, Venizelism or anti-Venizelism, that is, they were politically deformed*. Politicization took hold of the whole of society, in the sense that the active groups did not represent or stand up only for their own interests, but were concerned with questions of general politics. Thus, in a similar manner to other countries where in the political sphere institutionalization did not correspond to participation, the insufficient socialization capacity of institutions, including the parties, *facilitated immediate action, where each group put into practice its own instruments of power*: the rich man bribed, the officers revolted, the workers struck, the mob demonstrated, and the deputies tyrannized the civil servants.” Hering, *Die Politischen Parteien in Griechenland*, vol. II, 905 (emphasis mine).
- 123 Liakos, *Ergasia kai politikē*, 538 ff.
- 124 Policies of the predecessor were reversed to the degree that they did not touch upon sensitive issues. So while the Popular Party dared touch Venizelos’ educational policy, it could not afford drastic changes in neuralgic sectors like the labor or the agrarian one. While this circumstance may be partially attributed to ideological factors, for example Gounarēs had demonstrated from the outset of his career a certain sensitivity for social issues and was certainly not indifferent towards reformatory politics, it appears far more sensible to explain the policies of the two blocks in terms of political expediency. None of the two blocks, for example, attempted to equilibrate deficits and achieve an augmentation of state revenue through taxation, a circumstance that would clearly intensify confrontation on governmental policies. See: Chatzēiosēf, “*Ē belle époque tou kefalaïou*,” 318. Some additional examples of the complementary nature of parties’ policy can well make the point. In order to combat food shortages during the 1917 crisis, the pro-monarchical government of Spyridon Lambros founded the Ministry of Food Supply and Autarchy. Upon his return to Athens, Venizelos not only retained the ministry, but also complemented it with the Ministry of Agriculture and State Lands and furthermore with the Ministry of Relief. Chatzēiosēf, “*Ē belle époque*,” 346. The designs for the introduction of social security in Greece are also indicative of the trend. When the anti-Venizelists came to power in 1920 they produced a first legislative draft on social security. In its attempts to counterbalance the restrictions it placed upon syndicalist freedoms and its violent confrontations with the working force during the general strike of 1923, the revolutionary committee that removed the anti-Venizelists and took over after the collapse of the Asia Minor campaign not only enacted the law, but also extended certain of its provisions. Apart from the fact that

- the legislation was insufficient, the incident demonstrates nicely the interdependent dynamics between alternations in power, the instrumentalization of social policies, the use of repressive mechanisms and legitimization techniques. See: Liakos, *Ergasia kai politikē*, 392–394.
- 125 Marketos, *O Alexandros Papanastasiou kai ē epochē tou*, 320.
- 126 Mavrogordatos, “Venizelismos kai astikos eksygychronismos,” 11.
- 127 According to Mouzelis, the inter-war period and the National Schism witnessed also a reshuffling of the system of clientalism. He claims that the expansion of the bureaucracy and the state curtailed the extended local autonomy of the “traditional oligarchic type of patronage” and led to a kind of “modernization of clientalism.” This reconfiguration of power was effected by the relative strengthening of the central organization of parties, as political emphasis and resources were moved progressively from the local to the national level. This kind of “transfer” of authority led to a kind of “loosening” up of previous networks. The system itself became increasingly fragile and insecure as economic changes and concomitant demands seemed to erode the networks of political patronage and traditional relationships. Mouzelis, *Modern Greece*, 13–14.
- 128 Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic*, 151.
- 129 Ibid., 220.
- 130 All groupings and wings within the KKE suffered from sectarianism, according to which “only the ‘healthy,’ fit and ideologically ‘correct’ oriented elements should have a place in the party, and these were logically the adherents of ones’ own group. On the other hand, sympathizers were confronted with a constant dilemma. Far-reaching social and economic demands were raised in their name, while having to acknowledge at the same time that the materialization of these demands was impossible under the conditions of that time; despite the promises of the party leadership, there existed no prospects for a Communist revolution.” Hering, *Die Politischen Parteien in Griechenland*, vol. II, 985.
- 131 Elefandēs, *Ē epangelia tēs adynatēs epanastasēs: KKE kai astismos ston mesopolemo*.
- 132 See: *Dokimio istorias tou KKE*.
- 133 McDermott and Agnew, *The Comintern*, 43.
- 134 Ibid., 58.
- 135 Elefandēs, *Ē epangelia*, 53.
- 136 “The communist movement reacted reflexively to the savagery of bourgeois domination and promulgated the decadence of bourgeois ideology, but without demonstrating that it was a blind alley, without analyzing or subverting it. Consequently it did not produce communist ideology for itself or for the masses that followed it.” Ibid., 84.
- 137 Ibid., 107–109.
- 138 As maintained by McDermott and Agnew: “Above all, the new Communist parties were parties of youth. According to Riddell, approximately two-thirds of the delegates to the Second Comintern Congress were un-

- der forty years of age. They represented a younger generation disillusioned with the old staid institutions of labor. In France and Italy, the ideological struggle over affiliation to the Comintern was also a conflict of generations and many of the new leaders—Louis-Oscar Frossard, Antonio Gramsci and Bodriga, for example—were barely thirty years old. The socialist youth movements were symbolic of the post-war mood of radicalism and many of their militants joined the fledgling Communist parties.” McDermott and Agnew, *The Comintern*, 20.
- 139 The Marxist Archive was created after 1922 by young Communists, some of who had previously formed part of the Communist Union, and received its name from the homonymous publication (*Archeio Marxismou*), first published in the spring of 1923. It was a strictly hierarchical organization constructed around numerically small nucleuses of adherents and operated in absolute secrecy reminiscent of secret societies. The upper level consisted of the theoretically mature members, followed by the members initiated in Marxist thought, while the lower echelons contained sympathizers and simple readers of the journal. The Marxist Archive developed a remarkable translating activity of classical Marxist texts, an activity that corresponded to their axiomatic belief that the Greek working class had first to be ideologically educated before it could become politically active. The Archive split in 1925–26 as certain members demanded greater transparency and democratization of internal procedures, as well as the abandonment of secrecy, endorsing open and public political activity.
- 140 Nikolopoulos, *Ē allē opsē tou ellēnikou ergatikou kinēmatos*, 21.
- 141 On the Greek Socialist Party in the inter-war, see: the political memoirs of Someritēs, *Ē megalē kambē*. See also: Psallidas, “Gia tēn sygkrotēsē tou Sosialistikou Kommatos Elladas.”
- 142 The Veterans’ Movement has not been as yet an object of historical investigation. For the veterans’ manifesto, see: *Polemos kata tou polemou*.
- 143 The “chameleon-like” profile of Venizelos and his supra-class, popular appeal is attested well by the communist intellectual Serafim Maximos. He comments on the return of Venizelos in 1926: “Only an exceptionally demagogic personality could make it credible simultaneously to workers and bourgeois, capitalists and peasants and democrats and monarchists alike that he was capable of satisfying, pleasing and ameliorating the condition of everybody. Only a miracle man could perform such a role successfully, even more so given the specific objective and subjective preconditions. As the situation headed irreversibly towards a general parliamentary crisis, and given the fact that this crisis engaged all parliamentary parties, the only solution in order to save both the party and the parliament was Venizelos. As a raw model, as a leader, [he represented] vigor for the bourgeois, correct administration [in the eyes] of the people; he was pro-labor for the toiling masses, ‘father figure’ to the refugees, conservative for the conservatives, leftist for the leftists, reconciler for those

- seeking reconciliation and intransigent for the intransigents.” Maximos, *Koinovoulío i diktatoria*, 147.
- 144 Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, 77–79.
- 145 Ibid., 79.
- 146 Ibid., 81.
- 147 Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*, 81.
- 148 If the cost of basic necessities in 1914 is taken as an index value of 100, then by 1919 it had risen to 1,754 and by January 1920 it stood at 2,577.
- 149 Rothschild, *The Communist Party*, 94.
- 150 Ibid., 148.
- 151 Van Boeschoten, *Anapoda chronia*, 119.
- 152 Foundanopoulos, *Elegchos kai eleftheria*, 226–227. See also: Elefandēs, *Ē epangelia*.
- 153 Liakos, *Ergasia kai politikē*, 176.
- 154 The “moral economy” thesis as the principal form of articulation of labor protest is argued convincingly by Foundanopoulos in his study of strike activity in the city of Thessaloniki from 1908 to 1936. See: Foundanopoulos, *Elegchos kai eleftheria*.

VI. EPILOGUE

1. Divergent Paths Towards Modernity?

The nineteenth century witnessed the introduction of diverse ideologies of mass representation such as liberalism, nationalism and socialism in the Balkan space suggesting a menu of new identities (political, social, national) and offering, in the first place, an “imaginary” integration of the predominantly peasant masses into the novel categories of modernity. “Wrangling” with the legacy of the Ottoman past, new “imagined communities” were to emerge proposing “bonds” of allegiance and solidarity quite different from the “habitus” and the hitherto experience of the majority of the Balkan populations. With respect to the fate of liberalism in the Balkans, it could be argued that in all Balkan cases, the liberal civic project was compromised for the liberal nationalist project, reflecting as much the spirit of romanticism prevalent at the times and the unfavorable contextual conditions in which the liberal project was implemented (the absence of the effects of the Industrial Revolution, etc.) as the quest of emerging political elites for recognition, legitimacy and hegemony. In all Balkan cases, the project of modernity epitomized the quest for a strong centralized state in its maximum geographical expansion and the race to catch up with other parts of the world. It resulted in the realization of expensive and extensive state-building projects, boosting the development of the state machinery and the military and carried usually on the shoulders of populations, who, on the whole, benefited little from the new institution of the nation-state. As to why state building had to take precedence before economic modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Diana Mishkova argues convincingly that

... the formidable tasks of state-building and nation-building in the Balkans had to be carried out simultaneously with economic modernization. Why these took precedence over the efforts to counter economic backwardness seems logical: it was the nation-state that had to create the preconditions of the transformation, not vice-versa. Embarking on economic modernization in a situation of a rapidly increasing gap between forerun-

ners and laggards was unthinkable in the pre-modern framework, before the establishment of a conducive institutional and psychological setting and even without the modern state's direct economic activity. Hence the crucial role of the state in catching-up societies.¹

To an imaginary of modernity based on the premises of national cohesion, socialism counterproposed an imaginary on the premises of social solidarity, the dignity of labor and social justice. The disparity in socio-economic development however, imposed strains on the capacity to sustain a class discourse fashioned on identities according to the taxonomies proposed by Western variants of socialism (Marxism). Slow changes in the socio-economic structure did not allow for the creation of social subjects who were able to project their own future in this new version of modernity. To the extent that socialism could assert itself on the social terrain in the nineteenth century, it did so predominantly by addressing the dissolution of previous social categories, while simultaneously witnessing the slow emergence of new, uncertain and mixed categories of social existence in the long transitional period of the nineteenth century. To the extent that socialism was to inspire intellectual cadres, this took place predominantly on the basis of unfulfilled expectations of political emancipation than on the basis of aggravated class struggle. On the contrary, and as confirmed by the present analysis, eastern variants of socialism like populism had a greater chance to articulate the pulse and the mentality of the "moral economy" of disintegrating social categories and of expressing their "resistances" to the disciplining mechanisms of the state.

The Serbian case serves as a good example for the ambiguous paths of modernization. Spurred initially by the desire to control the process of modernization and the consequences it implied for the social structure of the country, the early Radicals exemplify a *defensive populist socialism*, where socialism was understood as a means to counter the "threatening" effects of "Westernization" and its broader socio-cultural connotations. The Radicals "moral revolt" was a reaction to the corrosive effects of the encroachment of the moneyed and increasingly market-oriented economy upon the traditional structures of their society. The low degree of social differentiation offered in the eyes of the Radicals a unique opportunity to evade the scenario of extreme social polarization, inject modern scientific and technological know-how into

their egalitarian social structures, and therefore move with little cost into a fairer future. Abbreviating the course of time signified for the early Radicals both the possibility of retaining the particularity of their popular (social and cultural) character and catching up with the more advanced parts of the world. Through the Janus-like but foremost the defensive character of their ideology, entailing elements such as the exaltation of the qualities of the pre-capitalistic past and the emphasis on the autarchy of the peasant commune, the Radicals entered the realm of ideological ambiguity. The retreat into the strengths of the local economic community was to facilitate the semantic passage that characterized their later theoretical mutation from the autarkic economic unit into the community of the nation.

In their ascendance to power, the Radicals moved progressively from a defensive populist socialism to a demagogical populist nationalism, instrumentalizing the language of mobilization and manipulating indigenous patriarchal values for agitational purposes. The Radicals were pioneering in conceptualizing the opportunities opened up by mass politics in a representative political system that had neglected to turn the peasantry, the most massive stratum of the country, into a social subject, and they made timely use of this availability. They oriented their discourse so as to catch and mobilize the patriarchal pulse of the peasantry and their anti-etatist disposition, and thus turned the “people” equated now with the peasantry and its worldview into their chief political ally in the confrontation with their political opponents. The Radicals proposed an imaginary that corresponded to the egalitarian aspirations and value system of the peasantry and furthermore equated the above with the “true” national essence. The veritable Serbian nation was the nation of the peasant son and the poor, which the Radicals rhetorically bestowed with the dignity and the right to be the only claimants of sovereignty against the state of the rich and the privileged. By legitimizing peasant patriarchalism, the Radicals legitimized themselves. In this dialectical process, the Radicals compromised aspects of their ideology that could alienate the peasants—the claim for communal property, for example—, and with time they accommodated themselves even further as much with given socio-economic circumstances as with the exigencies of power politics. As an end result, the Radicals incorporated the countryside into the state by “nationalizing” the peasantry. Having achieved political preponderance, the Radicals

oversaw a long-sought constitutional reform, which guaranteed their hegemonic status and turned Serbia into a constitutional monarchy.

The antinomies inherent in the introduction of modernity into the European semi-periphery are best exemplified in the Bulgarian case. The theoretical debate between the Broads and the Narrows is illustrative of the difficulties of applying ready-made recipes of development into contexts that by nature of their structure and history had gone through a different evolution. The debate stands, furthermore, symbolically for the nature of the dilemmas facing intellectual elites in societies of the periphery experiencing a period of transition. The introduction of socialist theory and the establishment of the Marxist paradigm were undeniably a mark of modernity, the social composition of the country, however, posed *a priori* the limits of viability of the application of a “universal” Marxist model of social evolution. For the Broads, the country’s low degree of social differentiation implied the necessity to define the notion of the social subject as broadly and inclusively as possible. For the Narrows, it was precisely this transgression beyond the prescriptions of theory that provided grounds for concern. The difficulty in sustaining the semantic and sociological transition from “the toiling people” to “class” was the bedrock of discord within the social-democratic party. Indeed, the Bulgarian Social Democrats had managed to connect to a pulse among the population, but it was not the social pulse of an emerging proletariat as constructed in their political imaginary. Rather, the Socialists had tapped into the reservoir of pre-capitalistic defensive attitudes to change as articulated by threatened small producers, artisans and dissatisfied peasants. The Social Democrats had also connected to a political pulse; it was a political pulse, however, that related less to a vision of a future socialist order, than to popular and unfulfilled rudimentary aspirations—particularly among educated cadres—for basic, democratic rights.

Several factors were to facilitate the reception of socialism in this country: the initial “defensive” quality, characteristic of belated nationalisms; the elaboration of the Bulgarian national imaginary on the grounds of an agrarian egalitarian identity; the more secular character of Bulgarian nationalism;² a long-standing intellectual tradition indebted to Russian radical thought; the fragmented or, in other words, the unconsolidated and weak character of the liberal camp in Bulgaria—these are some of the reasons that go to explain the political break-

through of socialism as a modern political alternative in this country in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Between approximately 1890 and 1900, the Social Democrats spoke a *double language*. It was, in the first place, the idiom of political practice, a discourse representing an admixture of pre-Marxist and locally processed socialist themes, which in its social content was very close to the idiom encountered in the case of Serbian Radicals. In the second place, it was the official social-democratic idiom, predominantly for consumption by the intellectual milieu. The tension between the existence of two idioms, running parallel and contradicting each other, serves as the trace indicating the hiatus involved in the process of adaptation. It is worth pinpointing once more that the Broads' dissent, or better stated their "retreat," from the orthodox Marxist version of modernity came about as a result of the realization of the discrepancy in the degrees of development and their effort to define positively the socialist project for their "long" transitional present. The realization of asymmetrical socio-economic development signified also in the case of the Broads a partial retreat from the universalizing prescriptions of Marxism, and the search for adequate, locally-processed answers to the problem of socio-economic growth. That this position would, in the long run, indirectly bring them closer to the concept of the nation might come as no surprise.

Radically different were the political ramifications that the broad socialist pools would experience in Serbia and Bulgaria. In Serbia, the Radicals managed to choke and frustrate the creation of an authentic peasant party (by a group of peasant tribunes around Adam Bogosavljević in the mid-1870s), absorb their legacy and subsequently present themselves as the mouthpiece of the peasantry. The later offshoots of the generic radical pool like the Independent Radicals or the new socialist contenders like the Social Democrats oriented themselves progressively with different degrees of emphasis from the rural towards the urban element. The case in Bulgaria was exactly the opposite. The Social Democrats' self-fashioning as a proletarian, urban party and their half-hearted commitment to the peasants' cause had a double effect. In the first place, it alienated socialist intellectuals who were initially trained as socialists but who then turned to the Agrarians (as in the Cerkovski case). In the second, as an ideology the agrarian movement constituted itself partially in theoretical opposition to the extremities of the Marxist developmental scenario and the futuristic vi-

sion it proclaimed (big land concentration, pauperization of the peasants, abolition of private property, etc.).

The failure of socialism to make a political breakthrough before 1918 and the inability of communism to control a distinct political space until the end of the 1930s is the main thesis of the Greek chapter. The fragmented and inconclusive character of socialist discourse points to the *absence of coherence, standardization and continuity* as the basic traits of the early period. The functional constitutional representative political system in Greece invalidated rather early the appeal of radical alternative political options. The reluctance to proceed with a clear systemic break, the low degree of socialist theoretical qualifications, the greater degree of urbanization and bourgeoisification of Greek intellectuals, the possibility of finding professional integration in the broader and wealthier world of Greek Diaspora communities led, on the one hand, to geographical dispersion and, on the other, nurtured the expectations of intellectuals (and socialists) of systemic integration and social ascendancy. The all-pervasive character of Greek nationalism diluted even further the already fragmented socialist discourses and invalidated other options of imagining solidarity, for example across class lines.

The powerful imaginary of Greek nationalism based the notion of superiority, be it due to the legacy of Greek culture within the Orthodox millet or due to a historicist construction elaborated on the basis of historical periods of indisputable and internationally acclaimed past grandeur, absorbed all the energies of intellectual cadres and dominated the Greek intellectual establishment until the early 1920s. Indeed, it was only after the watershed of 1922, when the Greek state shrunk to its finalized dimensions, that Greece would enter an era of more sober and realistic discourses and conceptualizations of the future. It comes thus as no surprise that the initiative for the unification of the socialist movement did not come either from the eminent Greek socialist intellectuals, nor from the intellectual caste *per se*. Rather, it was the culmination of the efforts of “outsiders” (the Federation) and educated professionals.

For the early period, the failure of socialist intellectuals to connect to and guide the early labor movement, their lack of success in establishing a political formation, gave the *time advantage* to Eleftherios Venizelos to proceed first with his Bismarckian project of patenting modernity from above, absorbing radical intellectual forces into his own

party, and defining the project of modernity in his own paternalistic terms. The Socialists/Communists of the inter-war period never really recovered from this *head start* by the Liberals. The National Schism, the formative context of the inter-war, imposed the logic of the political urgency of a “civil war,” entrapped social energy in political bipolarization and deformed the dimensions of social struggle. In the 1940s, the trapped social energy of the inter-war period mixed with the quest for national liberation provided the powerful *local dynamic* of the resistance movement in Greece.

2. Legitimacy and Mass Politics

The legitimization of social order is an imperative function of political systems. Turning peasants into political and national subjects was the primary goal of liberalism in the Balkans. Generally, it could be argued that the concept of popular sovereignty, central to the political philosophy of liberalism, targeted foremost the engineering of the national rather than the political community. As observed by Diana Mishkova, liberalism was more a constituent part of ideological and political nationalism than the other way around.³ Liberal nationalism, according to the same author, establishes legitimacy in two concurrent ways: in the first place, as an ideology, by propelling the struggle for national unification and independence and, in the second, by upholding a new concept of legitimate government, other than the traditional one, whose legitimacy in the new context derives from the sovereign nation.⁴ Despite the fact that all political systems in the Balkans were subjected—in some way or other—to illicit procedures, the legitimacy and stability they enjoyed varied considerably between the different cases.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Greece was in possession of a constitutional system enjoying both legitimacy and stability. The acceptance of electoral competition as the institutionalized arena of politics was the result of the mutual interests of the crown and the political elites in the maintenance of equilibriums. The passage to mass politics as well as the process of the nationalization of the masses took place within the framework of liberalism. This circumstance not only legitimized it as a political ideology but signified also the solidification of liberalism, before processes of social polarization and the urgency of the social question would come to challenge it as a paradigm of modernity. Legitimization in the name of popular sovereignty was achieved through an open political system that did not institutionalize inequalities, while the fortunes of the nation were elevated to the dominant preoccupation of the intellectual establishment. To the degree that the social question was not as yet explosive, socialism would remain a peripheral political option. Venizelos rehabilitated the liberal project on

the eve of the twentieth century, at a critical moment in time, and patented modernity with his own version of an interventionist state.

In Serbia, radicalism defeated rather early the liberal version of modernity. Moreover, liberalism in Serbia was discredited before a representative political system was put in place. The Radicals incorporated in their agenda some of the claims of classical liberalism, like the establishment of constitutional rule; their project, however, had a double-edged effect. The modernization of the political system and the extension of popular sovereignty were rather the result of a Jacobin political philosophy that regarded politics as the monopolistic arena of one party. Moreover, the Radicals explicitly grafted the notion of popular sovereignty with an amalgam of social and ethnic content, which resulted in a collectivistic, patriarchal and egalitarian concept of "the people." The passage to mass politics and the nationalization of the peasant masses would be accomplished, as already witnessed, in a very dynamic way by them. Between 1903 and 1918, the Radicals would maintain their preponderance and would only slowly relinquish their Jacobin monopolistic pretensions to power. In their desire to secure the functioning of institutions, they would come progressively to accept politics as the arena of confrontation of diverse interests.⁵ Both in the case of Greece and Serbia, the politicization and nationalization of the masses were well on their way before the rupture of the First World War.

Also in the case of Romania, liberalism achieved the establishment of functional constitutional rule. It took the form of a "gentlemen's agreement" between the monarch and the two leading political formations of the nineteenth century, as both contenders were interested in maintaining an equilibrium of power. Although in this case also constitutionalism enjoyed both legitimacy and stability, precisely as in the case of Greece, it remained in essence an elitarian business. Restricting by means of a closed and exclusive political system the political participation of the peasant masses, it was a game played "by the rules" but in the absence of the ground players.

In the case of Bulgaria, liberalism remained fragmented and weak. This partially accounts for the deficient incorporation of the peasant masses into the political system, despite the existence of a constitutional system that allowed for immediate and direct participation, just as in the case of Greece. If liberalism achieved temporarily legitimacy for the project of national expansion and unification, it did not convince

as a representative of legitimate political rule. It is open to discussion, whether this “weak” liberalism is not also partially accountable for a “weak” nationalism as well. In the case of Bulgaria, the liberal project lost its credibility quite early as can be demonstrated by the “mushrooming” of democratic-centrist and leftist parties. This circumstance in conjunction with the discrepancy between the urban and the agrarian world and the aggravated situation, particularly after the watersheds of the Balkan and First World wars, meant that liberalism in the Bulgarian case would never really recover.

Liberalism, for different reasons, lost the game over the masses both in Bulgaria and in Romania. In both countries the entry of the masses into politics would take place in the inter-war period, for reasons that had less to do with liberalism than with more radical versions of modernity. Delegitimized liberalism in the case of Bulgaria would swing the pendulum towards the radical anti-war Left. In the case of Romania, the incorporation of ethnically and culturally very diverse regions compounded cleavages. This circumstance strengthened the imperative to enforce nation-state building, and would result in concerted efforts to nationalize the masses, swinging the political pendulum towards the extreme right.⁶

3. Socialism

Socialism in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Balkans was bound to address the imbroglio between agrarian structures and modernization rather than the effects of an absent or weak industrialization. The resilience and the long-lasting effects that populism had in the region, both as a version of agrarian socialism but also as an alternative version of modernity, testify to this. Altogether, the influence of populism in the Balkans needs to be re-evaluated. Despite its empowering vision, populism, due to its utopian qualities, could never materialize a real modernization of the countryside. It provided, however, the basis for related ideologies, such as Bulgarian and Romanian agrarianism, and would continue to challenge Marxism and its assumptions of social evolution, even in the beginning of the twentieth century. Populism's "seductiveness" derived from two sources: the realization of asymmetric socio-economic development with respect to other parts of the world and the predominantly agrarian character of the Balkan lands. Both made the projection of a speedy passage to industrial society appear unrealistic or removed in time. The Social Democrats who passed through the school of populism would retain, however, a sensitivity for the peasant world as the thought and action of figures like Gabrovski and Dobrogeanu-Gherea demonstrate. Despite the fact that the Balkan Social Democrats—the most perspicacious among them—did acknowledge the necessity to develop adequate answers to the agrarian issue, they did not have the courage to challenge straightforwardly the authority of the great masters of the Second International, nor were they encouraged to do so.

Marxism in the Balkans was challenged not merely by populism but, as we witnessed in the Bulgarian chapter, by revisionism also. Despite the fact that their respective theoretical points of departure were quite different, the core issue was really the agrarian question. Most probably, without the rise of the agrarian movement in Bulgaria at the turn of the century, the inter-party dissent would have remained a tri-

fling episode. The independent politicization of the peasantry, however, sounded the alarm and initiated further reflection also upon the future of the lower middle classes in Bulgaria. The above, combined with the weakness of the working class and the derailment of the political system, shifted the scales more in favor of the broader political representativity of socialism in the Bulgarian public sphere. Considering all the local circumstances that contributed to it, the debate reflected nevertheless a cardinal dilemma of international social democracy with respect to the treatment of time. The center of gravity evolved as much around the relationship between theory and practice, as around the correlation between the time axis of present and future: What could socialism be without theoretical guidance, that is, without the precise and illuminating vision of the end goal? In other words, only the end goal, that is the future, could prescribe the functional needs of political practice in the present. At the same time, at the other end of the line, the association could be reversed: was the barricading behind theory only a means to avoid strategic thinking with respect to social action in the present? The Greek Reformists (the Sociologists) avoided similar dilemmas through their immediate incorporation into the political *status quo*. The Greek case helps reflect on another major issue related to the complicated relationship between theory and practice in international socialism. The belated institutionalization of a party formation as witnessed in the Greek cases study tends to confirm the significance of political representation, that is the fact that without a worker's party the working class could never be constituted as a political subject.⁷

Despite their claim to the contrary (Blagoev, for example), we can argue now with historical retrospection that the greatest contribution of the Balkan Social Democrats was indeed the extension of political rights, in other words, their contribution to political modernization. The general evaluation of Geoff Eley with respect to the contribution of the Left in pushing the limits for the democratization of politics appears valid also in the Balkans. The Left "consistently pushed the boundaries of citizenship outward and forward, demanding democratic rights where *anciens régimes* had refused them, defending democratic gains against subsequent attacks and pressing the case for ever-greater inclusiveness."⁸ The Balkan Social Democrats need to be credited with

one additional input. As underscored by Eley regarding the role of the European Left in general, socialists also injected “some notion of social justice” into the political and democratic concept of the “sovereignty of the people.” It implied that peoples’ sovereignty was not only denied “by restrictive and repressive political systems, but also by unequal social structures.”⁹

4. Politics and the State

If socialist intellectuals function as the salient actors in this narrative on Balkan modernity, the concealed yet pragmatically dominant actor of modernity in all three stories is the *state*. The Serbian Radicals besieged the state in order to impede their opponents from bringing their version of modernity to pass. Through their ascendance to power, fashioned on the model and in the spirit of political Jacobinism, the Radicals sought to redirect and engineer evolution from above. Moreover, in their theoretical mutation from the notion of skipping phases in historical evolution to the acceptance of capitalism, the Radicals concentrated their efforts in transforming the character of the state as the sole realistic instrument for implementing an equitable distribution of wealth. The Bulgarian Broads sought in the interventionist role of the state the substitute for the lack of dynamic social forces that could move Bulgarian society and its economy to the higher stages prescribed by their modern ideology. Finally, the modernizer Venizelos instrumentalized the interventionist state in order not only to control, but also to engineer social and economic evolution, promote a paternalistic design of capitalistic development by mutually neutralizing the conflictual partners involved, and implementing a rational design of modernity.

The preponderance of the state as the major modernizing force in societies of the periphery and the disproportionate relationship between it and the enterprising forces of society has been the historical outcome of asymmetrical and asynchronous historical developments on the world scale. Moving geographically from west to the east in the trajectory of historical development, feebleness in social evolution is compensated and substituted through the increase in the competences, the involvement and the intervention of the state as the motor for modernization. It is precisely this “weakness” in social evolution that predetermines to a certain extent and effectively strengthens the role of the state as a regulatory force.¹⁰

5. Legacies

Legacies form part of the *longue durée* in history. They provide for continuity of traditions in time and space. Concluding the presentation on intellectuals and paradigms, it is worthwhile emphasizing that there was not really *a cross-Balkan fertilization in the adaptation of the various socialist paradigms in the nineteenth century*. Generally speaking, none of the Balkan countries adopted its socialism from its surrounding neighbors, no matter how advanced theoretically they might have been. (For example, at the turn of the century the Bulgarians were in much better command of foreign literature and socialist theory. The Romanians, particularly Dobrogeanu-Gherea, advanced interesting theoretical positions, etc.) No doubt, influences on a petty scale did exist but did not go beyond singular cases and individuals, while even this kind of limited influence was of a bounded nature. It never involved the proper adaptation of paradigms. Generally speaking, the more we move from the space of empire to the restricted space of the nation state, inter-Balkan communication channels are progressively weakened and lost. Linguistic barriers could provide also for an additional explanation. It seems, however, to be more a predicament of small countries on the periphery, and perhaps further testimony to the psychological disposition of dependency, that the principal and primary connection is always sought and found in the authoritative theoretical center outside of the Balkans, while inter-Balkan communication remained essentially limited.¹¹ This predicament holds true not only for the adaptation of socialist paradigms, but has a more generic value with respect to the issue of inter-Balkan communication altogether. *Intellectual fertilization across the various Balkan boundaries remains low even today*. (With respect to the legacy of the left, the above picture should be corrected partially for the inter-war period, when the Balkan Communist Federation provided for centralized coordination of strategies and know-how, however under the hegemonic auspices of the Bulgarian Communist Party. It should also be remembered that the Yugoslav Communists were instrumental in the setting up of the Communist Party of Albania. And

finally, that the Yugoslav Communists achieved emancipation from the big authoritative center with the Tito–Stalin break of 1948).

The transportation of diverse ideologies into the European periphery as a constituent part of our conceptualization and canonization of modernity raises the issue of the diverse and asymmetrical temporalities of modernity, both as a “real” object of inquiry and as a mode of “subjective” perception. As discussed in the introductory section, we may observe in the first place a “dislocation” or a “discrepancy” in the function of ideologies in the process of their transposition into a different context (socialism not as a reaction to the exigencies of modernity, but as a recipe for modernization, or socialism as a fulfillment of the failed project of political liberalism). Moreover, there is a rearrangement, a quasi-overlapping of temporal sequences, quite different from the temporal sequences that generated these ideologies in the first place and in the initial matrix (e.g., the quasi-synchronous introduction of liberalism and socialism). To phrase it in the words of Reinhart Koselleck, we can observe the concurrent presence of different time structures (*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*).¹²

Socialism and by extension the communist experiments implemented in the region after the First World War belong to the long and troublesome saga of attempting to introduce modernity and apply modernization in the Southeastern European periphery. This meant, in the first place, transforming predominantly rural areas into units of modernized industrial production and transferring the labor potential of rural populations into the world of the city. Perhaps now we can even agree with Marx on the impossibility of skipping phases in the path of evolution. If this stands true, our responsibility towards less privileged areas of the world is even greater today. If the Balkan Social Democrats of the nineteenth century based their faith on the certainty of the corrosive effects of a dynamic capitalism and a speedy industrialization that never materialized, the communist states of the post-war era and the experiment of real socialism generally tried to *compensate for the time lag* by implementing an accelerated modernization program from above. Evaluating the experiment of real socialism remains a task for historians. What can be ascertained for sure is that the communist regimes of the mid-twentieth century had goals, which they partially achieved—at what cost is another story—that were a desideratum of the “previous” modernity drive of the nineteenth century. These goals

included speedy industrialization, urbanization, broad dissemination of education, advancement of technical know-how, advanced local processing of resources, augmented output of productivity and a rational planning of society and economy. The fact that, contrary to revolutionary expectations, the socialist experiment was materialized in the less developed eastern part of the continent rather than in its industrialized western counterpart, testifies as much to the empowering imaginary of an accelerated modernization that socialism inspired in these societies, as to the urgency with which a reasonable, alternative path to modernization was sought. It can be disputed whether real socialism ever achieved the goal of an efficient and dynamic modernization. Perhaps for a limited period of time the answer would be affirmative; in the long run it appears negative. However, the *race against time* is the predicament and the prerogative of latecomers.

In evaluating the broader impact of the leftist legacy in the Balkans, it may well be argued that the Socialists (a label taken here as a holistic denomination, referring to the whole spectrum of leftist ideological variants like anarchism, social democracy, communism, etc.) could and should be considered the *proper heirs of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans*. Despite their enormous shortcomings and simplistic idealizations, the Socialists represented, persistently and diachronically, perhaps the only ideological option that continued to treat the region as an organic, indivisible whole—even if only theoretically—retained a vision of a broad living space where the category of nationality was of subordinate significance, and remained conscious of the extreme variety of ways of life and traditions in the peninsula. This assessment should serve by no means as an apologetic simplification of the extremely complicated and at times contradictory relationships within the Balkan left. Nor does the legacy of the Balkan left consist simply of a “happy” story of “pure idealists” and “uncontaminated internationalists.” Quite the contrary; the Balkan Socialists were often in conflict within their national party formations and also in their inter-Balkan relationships. Power conflicts, democratic deficits, ideological oscillations, inter-party exterminations, etc., form part of the leftist legacy as well. But with reference to the leftist heritage specifically in the Balkan space, the Socialists should be given credit for perpetrating a vision of social and ethnic justice in a way that no other ideological option in the same area ever did. If in our globalized world of today the principle of multicultural-

ism appears as natural and self-evident as ever, if studying and providing space for minorities has become a respectable topic, if we retrospectively condemn the veracities and extremities of the Balkan nationalisms, this was not the prevalent frame of mind in the “age of empire” and “the age of extremes.” *For daring to dream otherwise in an age that thought and acted otherwise* is what the Balkan Socialists should be given credit and for which they should be paradigmatically remembered. It is worth remembering that the majority of the Balkan Socialists resisted as much the frenzy of the Balkan Wars, as the almost Europe-wide bellicose predisposition of the First World War. It is also worth recalling that the Second World War witnessed the rise of local resistance movements led largely, but not exclusively, by the left in a region with far less material resources than other parts of this continent, which chose to capitulate or collaborate. The legacy of the left in the Balkans constitutes undeniably part of the history of the International and European left and its quest for a world without borders, a long pedigree of leftist commitment to the principles of internationalism, which despite inadequacies, shortcomings and fiascos comprises indisputably one of the most significant and valuable contributions of leftist ideologies to the European heritage. The fact that capitalism today is doing a much better job in corroding national borders than real socialism ever managed to do represents almost a paradoxical verification of the teachings of Karl Marx and the intransigence of Rosa Luxemburg.

Several of the issues examined in this book seem as pertinent and modern today as they did when they were initiated over a century ago. This is not the case, however, because history repeats itself; in fact, it never does. Their modernity derives rather from the fact that socialism was a theory intricately related to and deeply implicated in the fortunes of humans and their social relations. What is an equilibrated relationship between theory and practice in politics? Is socialism driven predominantly by an ethical impetus or by a model of social development based on scientific analysis? Should socialist parties today represent catch-all parties or political agents embodying specific, class interests? Is socialism in the age of globalization supposed to represent the “moral economy,” or should it take up the role of the “modernizer” of social relations? What can be the role of the Left in the age of globalization?

If the end of real socialism signified the end of a repressive system and its illusions, it simultaneously rehabilitated a suffocating utilitar-

ian and pragmatist realism that leaves no space for illusions. However, human history has never existed and cannot exist without projections of the future, that is, without utopia. For it has always been the human desire to defy the problems of the present, which coupled with the capacity to imagine a “better society,” that provoked innovative thought and initiated change.

NOTES

- 1 Mishkova, “Modernization and Political Elites,” 87.
- 2 Though religion had been at the front line in the political confrontation between Greeks and Bulgarians regarding the creation of an independent Bulgarian church, the Exarchate, religion was not to be incorporated later on as a principal ingredient of Bulgarian national identity, like in the cases of Serbia and Greece. In other words, whereas religion played a catalytic role in the political conflict as a negative identity marker, that is, as a point of distinction for the Bulgarians within the framework of the Rum millet, it will not be incorporated later as a positive identity marker, that is, we will not experience the absolute overlay between ethnicity and religion. The reasons should be sought in the fact that the confrontation did not hinge upon religious content but upon the prerogative to administer the empire’s orthodox populations. As soon as the debate was resolved on an institutional level, orthodoxy in itself had nothing more to offer as a differentiation marker, and is for this reason not incorporated as a central identity trait.
- 3 Mishkova, *Prisposobiavane na svobodata*, 218.
- 4 Ibid., 315.
- 5 See: Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija*.
- 6 See: Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*.
- 7 See: Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, 98.
- 8 Eley, *Forging Democracy*, 10.
- 9 Ibid., 18.
- 10 Liakos, “Prepei na epanaprosdiorisoume tēn ennoia tēs aristeras?” 36–45.
- 11 I am addressing principally intellectual cooperation in the form of exchange of know-how, expertise, experience, and paradigms. I am not referring to attempts to establish political cooperation between the Balkan Socialists as in the cases of the Balkan Wars and the First World War.
- 12 See: Koselleck, *Futures Past*.

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Index

- Agrarian Bank (Greece), 357, 399
Agrarian Union. *See* Bulgarian
Agrarian National Union
Agrarianism
 Bulgarian, 163, 215–223
 Greece, 303, 304
 First agrarian party (1923), 325
 Serbian, 96–98, 303–304
 General, 303–304
Ahmad, Feroz, 13
Aksakov, Konstantin, 114
Akselrod, 22, 23, 179
Albania, 149
Aleksander I of Serbia, 133, 142
Alexandrēs, A., 337–338
Alexandria, 391
Alexandrov, P., 21
anarchism
 Greece, 325
Ancient Greece, 317
anti-clericalism, 27
anti-Venizelists, *see* Popular Party (Greece)
Antypas, Marinos, 325, 336
Aravandinos, P., 338
Arbore-Ralli, Z. C., 21
Armenians, 50, 57, 322
Asia Minor, 285, 302, 380, 391–392
Asia Minor campaign and
 catastrophe, 306, 361, 367, 375, 400, 402
Association of the Greek Working
 Classes (STETE) (1908), 396
Athens, 345, 351, 361, 391, 400, 402
Austria, 21, 74, 93–95, 100
Austria-Hungary, 74, 93–95, 118, 130–131
Bakalov, Georgi, 23, 52, 58, 166, 180, 196, 210, 232, 234, 237
Bakunin, Michael, 23, 35, 86, 148, 175, 329
Bakūrdzhiev, D., 23
Balabanov, Georgi, 57
Balabanov, Slavi, 23, 57–58, 179
Balugdžić, Živojin, 64
Bank of Athens, 391
Bank of Greece, 399
Banque de l'Union Parisienne, 391
Belgrade, 93, 97, 118, 121, 147, 304
Belinski, 26, 58
Benaroya, Avraam, 343
Bernstein, Eduard, 164–165, 171, 220, 273, 275–277, 300
Bessarabia, 21, 50, 297, 393
Billington, James, 26
Bismarck, Otto von, 340, 352
Blagoev, Dimitŭr, 21, 22, 45, 46, 52, 55, 57–58, 150, 164, 166–169, 172, 175–178, 181, 185–188, 190, 193, 197, 209–211, 216, 231–237, 240, 258, 275, 287–290, 292, 294–295, 298, 311–312, 329, 333, 417
Blagoeva, Vela, 331
Blagoyevtsy circle, 290
Blanc, Louis, 65, 148, 175, 275
Blanquist, 27, 60
Bodriga, 404
Bogdanović, Mira, 55, 146
Bogosavljević, Adam, 96–98, 147, 220, 410
Boinikov, 175
bolshevism, 170–171, 307, 375–376
Bosnia, 12, 27, 93, 95
Bosnian uprising (1875), 22

- Botev, H., 45, 46, 47, 58
 Bozveliev, Konstantin, 42–44, 52,
 177, 181, 184, 192–193, 201, 205,
 287, 290–291, 345
 Broads, 3, 4, 22, 157–161, 164–174,
 187, 196, 222, 234, 237, 244,
 246, 258, 262, 265, 269, 273,
 275–276, 279, 283–289, 303,
 313, 354, 355, 396, 409–410, 419
 formation, 178
 ideology, 273–278
 historiography, 164–174
 Bulgaria, 1, 2, 4, 7–8, 12–13, 18–21,
 22, 24, 27, 40, 42, 44–46, 48,
 50–54, 64, 101, 149, 165, 171–
 172, 176, 185, 190, 212, 217,
 231–232, 235, 237, 241, 243,
 246, 252, 266–267, 273, 276,
 279, 280–282, 284, 302–303,
 305–306, 309–310, 332–333,
 376, 382–383, 393, 399
 early socialism, 175–178
 economic development, 201
 Marxism, 24, 185–187, 234–235
 political system, 279–285
 social democrats, 4, 5, 9, 159,
 175, 201, 207, 209, 211, 215, 218,
 258, 274, 284–285, 303, 372, 409
 Bulgarian Agrarian National Union
 (BANU) (1899), 108, 215–221,
 265, 286, 303–304, 385
 Bulgarian Communist Party, 157,
 166, 355, 369, 382, 384–385,
 420
 Bulgarian National Assembly
 9th session, 280
 11th session, 265
 12th session, 299
 Bulgarian principality, 24
 Bulgarian Social Democratic Party
 (1891), 177
 Bulgarian Workers' Social
 Democratic Party (BWSDP)
 (1894), 3, 23, 158–159, 169, 171,
 177, 211, 217, 229, 240, 278, 288,
 294, 313
 renamed Bulgarian Communist
 Party (1919), 355
 Buzludzha, 177
 Byzantine Empire, 141
Capital (Das Kapital), 21
 Carbonari, 57
 Carol I of Romania, 49
 Catholic Church, 116
 Cenić, Mita, 60, 63, 105, 107
 Cerkovski, 410
 Chalkiopoulos, P., 335
 Chatzopoulos, Kostas, 337, 341–343,
 345, 394, 396, 397
 Chernov, 209
 Chernyshevsky, Nikolai G., 28–31,
 34, 37, 39, 55, 58–59, 68–69, 72,
 77, 290, 351
 Choidas, Rokos, 336
 Comintern, 20, 157, 170, 307, 347,
 355, 368, 369, 370, 372–375,
 376–377, 379, 382, 385, 386,
 389, 403
Communist Manifesto, The, 185, 255
 publication in Balkan states,
 349
 Communist Party of Albania, 420
 Communist Party of Germany, 382
 Communist Party of Greece (KKE),
 5, 9, 301, 302, 305, 307–310,
 367–373, 376–380, 382, 403
 Communist Party of the Soviet
 Union, 368–369
 Communist Union (Greece), 404
 Comte, 32
 Congress of Berlin, 74–75, 94
 Constantine I of Greece, 131, 341,
 360–361, 363, 395
 Constitutional Block, 385
Contemporanul, 331
 Corinth, 338
 Croatia, 115, 149
 Croatian Peasant Party (HŠS), 303
 Czech lands, 188
 Czechoslovakia, 303
 Dabev, Eftim, 52, 57–58, 175, 177,
 287

- Daniel'son, 300
 Danilevski, Nikolai, 153
 Darwin, Charles, 220
 David, Edward, 220
 Debogori-Mokrievich, Vladimir K.,
 see Prokopiev
 Deligiannēs party (Greece), 331
 Delmouzos, Alexandros, 338–340
 Dēmētratos, Nikos, 336
 Dēmētratos, Panagēs, 336, 343
 demoticism, 328, 330, 335, 342,
 349–350, 392, 397
Die Neue Zeit, 269
 Dimitrov, Dimitŭr, 165, 255, 263–
 264, 267
 Djurić, Milan, 98
 Dobrogeanu-Gherea, 11, 21, 50, 214,
 233, 283, 330, 416, 420
 Dobroljubov, 26, 58
 Dobrudja, 50–51
 Dragiev, 217
 Dragomanov, 152, 290
 Dragoumēs, S., 337
 Drakoulēs, Platon, 20, 313, 341, 343,
 347, 396
Drugar, 181
 Dzhidrov, P., 251–252, 254–255
 Eastern Church, 115–116
 Eastern Question, 87
 Eastern Rumelia, 46, 321
 Educational Club, 340
 Egypt, 322, 324, 329, 391
 Ekaterinoslav, 50
 Engels, Friedrich, 44, 58, 185, 248,
 262, 289, 300, 329, 349
 England, 187, 190, 242, 270, 293
 Erfurt program, 23, 158, 290, 348
 Evelpidēs, H., 325
 Ferdinand I of Bulgaria, 48, 223,
 251, 279–280
 Filaretos, G., 335
 Filemonas, T., 335
 First International, 147
 France, 11, 187–188, 248, 270, 293,
 375, 403
 Gabrovo, 42, 55, 57, 58, 177, 211
 Gabrovski, Nikola, 23, 39–40, 42,
 44, 52, 56–57, 160, 166–167,
 169, 175, 177, 181, 194, 197–199,
 202, 204, 208–216, 222, 231,
 258, 277, 287–288, 292, 294, 416
 Garašanin, Ilija, 85, 138
 General Confederation of Greek
 Workers (GSEE), 346, 387
 Geneva, 23, 52, 166, 177–179
 Geneva group, 185
 George I of Greece, 50
 Georgiev, G., 261
 Germany, 21, 165, 176, 243, 248,
 252–253, 288, 338, 345, 376,
 382, 384, 398
 Gerschekron, Alexander, 77
 Giannios, Nikos, 20, 324, 341–345,
 348, 396–397
 Glas Javnosti, 147
 Glēnos, D., 340
 Glišić, Miloš, 96
 Glynos, Dēmētris, 313
 Gogol, Nikolai, 58
 Goudi Uprising (1909), 338, 351,
 353, 356, 362, 394, 398
 Gounarēs, Dēmētrios, 337–338, 360,
 401–402
 Gramsci, Antonio, 302, 380–381,
 404
 Greater Serbia, 85–86, 138
 Greco-Turkish war (1897), 353
 Greece, 1, 2, 4, 8, 13, 20, 25, 28,
 44, 48–4, 131, 149, 281, 284,
 301–405
 Greek Enlightenment, 302, 315, 319,
 324
 Greek Socialist Party (1909), 396
 Gulapchev, Spiro, 42–44, 52, 57–58,
 175, 192, 290
 Haskovo, 211
 Helleno-Ottomanism, 320
 Heraklion, 400
 Herzen, 26, 67–68, 112
 Hitler, Adolf, 382
 Holland, 270
 Hristić, Nikola, 132

- Huxley, Aldous, 288
Idionymon, 305, 389
 Ilinden Uprising (1903), 321
 Independent radicals (Serbia), 63–64, 143–147, 156, 216, 283, 410
 International Socialist Bureau, 289
 Ionian Islands, 50, 335–336
 Isaev, 165
 Istanbul, 76, 322, 324, 391
 Italy, 27, 248, 375, 403
 Izmir, *see* Smyrna
 Jacobin-Blanquist, 106
 Jagodina, 147
 Jambol, 208, 211, 247
 Japan, 337
 Japanese group, 337–339
Ĵavnost, 147
 Jews, 50, 128, 322
 Jovanović, Kosta, 39, 56, 58, 63, 216, 283
 Junimea group, 331
 Kallergēs, Stavros, 336
 Kallitsounakēs, D., 325
 Kapp Putsch, 382
 Karavelov, L., 45–47, 236
 Karavidas, K. D., 325
 Karima, Anna, 331
 Katić, Dimitrije, 96
 Kautsky, Karl, 160–161, 165, 221–222, 232, 255, 296–297, 349, 397
 Kazanlūk, 42, 44, 193, 211
 Kereevsky, Ivan, 113
 Kireler, 325
 Kirkov, G., 56, 167, 192, 221, 287
 Kharlakov, N., 166, 261
 Knićanka, Lena, 129
 Knjaževo, 54
 Koraes, Adamantios, 319
 Kordatos, Gianēs, 313
 Kotel, 58
 Koutoupēs, Th., 338
 Kragujevac, 90, 119, 121, 125, 154
 Krestić, 152–153
 Kropotkin, Peter, 58
 Künchev, A., 46
 Lapčević, Dragiša, 63
 Lassalle, Ferdinand, 65, 147, 148, 175, 177, 187, 199, 273, 275, 290
 Lavrov, Peter, 17–28, 30, 31–37, 39, 46, 60, 68, 109, 175, 249
 Lenin, Vladimir, 170, 264, 285, 288–289, 301
 Leninism, 170, 176, 234, 289
 Levantines, 322
 Levidi, 338
 Levski, V., 45–46
 Liberal Party (Greece), 301, 338–341, 351–352, 356, 358, 361–362, 394, 400
 liberalism, 11–12, 414–416
 Bulgarian, 414
 Serbian, 70–74, 85
 Livorno, 322
 London, 322
 Luxemburg, Rosa, 423
 Macedonia, 12, 50, 149, 282, 321, 348, 400
 Eastern Macedonia, 360
 Makrakēs, Apostolos, 331
 Malatesta, 58
 Marković, Ilka, 129
 Marković, Jevrem, 129
 Marković, Svetozar, 22–23, 36, 51, 55–56, 59, 61–63, 65, 72, 80, 82–83, 85–86, 89, 98–99, 101, 103, 105, 112–113, 117, 123, 126, 129, 137–138, 147–148, 150, 333
 Marseilles, 322
 Marx, Karl, 21, 44, 65, 87, 147, 148, 157, 175, 217, 248, 251–253, 255, 262–264, 289, 293–294, 300, 329, 349–350, 421–423
 Marxism, 2, 3, 4, 8, 19, 20–23, 64–65, 69, 104, 146–147, 159, 166, 176, 187, 234–235, 248, 251, 255, 263, 272, 284, 310
 Marxist Archive (1922), 375, 404
 Maslov, 209
 Mavromatas, G., 335
 Maximos, Serafim, 313, 404
Megali Idea, 305, 315

- Metaxas dictatorship, 306
 Michalopoulos, A., 335
 Mihailo, 109
 Mikhailovski, 31, 68–69, 82, 150, 293, 300
 Milan I of Serbia, 48, 72, 74–75, 109, 119, 124, 129–133, 139
 Military League, 351, 394, 398
 Milošević, Slobodan, 64
 Milovanović, Milija, 96
 Mintses, Boris, 22
 Mishkova, Diana, 141, 407, 414
 Mommsen, Theodor, 220
 Montenegro, 101, 149
 Morgan, Louis Henry, 220
 Moscow Slavic Philanthropic Committee, 22
 Müller, Adam Heinrich, 220
 Mutafov, 177
 Mylonas, A., 338
Narodna Volja, 60, 297
Narodničestvo, 2, 65, 284, *see also* Russian Populism
 Narodniks, 3, 21, 61, 96, 103, 112, 187, 213, 311, 330
 Narrows, 3, 157, 161, 163, 166–171, 173, 178, 196, 234, 240, 244, 251, 258, 261, 264, 265–266, 269, 284–289, 299, 313, 355, 376, 383–384, 409
 National Liberation Front (EAM), 304, 333
 National Peasant Party (PnȚ) of Romania, 303
 National Schism, 5, 131, 281, 306, 338, 342–343, 360, 361–366, 374–375, 383, 385, 387–388, 395, 399, 403, 412
 nationalism, 315–319
 Nečaev, 22, 39
 Nedialkov, G., 209
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 350
 Ninčić, Velisar, 152
 Nokov, Stojan, 23, 52, 57–58, 179
 November Terror, 363, 401
Novo Vreme, 191
Nravstvennata Zadacha na Inteligentsiata, 175
 Obradović, Sava, 98
 Obrenović dynasty, 332
Obshto Delo, 168, 178, 210, 223–239, 243
 October Revolution, 166, 358, 373, 384
 Odessa, 22, 288, 297
Omladina, 59, 85, 87, 147
 Orthodox Church, 319
Oslobodjenje, 98, 147
Oslobozhdenie, 209
 Ottoman Empire, 16, 85, 294, 315–316, 319–322, 324, 327, 342, 391–392
 ouvrierism, 20
 Paču, Lasar, 65
 Paliouras, S., 345
 Panagiotopoulos, A., 337
 Panas, Panagiotos, 324
 Pangalos, 378
 pan-Slavism, 22
 Papanastasiou, Alexandros, 338, 354, 363, 384, 394
 Pašić, Nikola, 23, 51, 74, 76, 88, 94, 98–99, 105, 110, 113–118, 125, 127, 131–132, 134, 139, 142, 147, 153, 154, 156, 352
 Patras, 338–339
 Pauperophilia movement, 290, *see also* Gulapchev
 Pax Ottomana, 13
 Peasant radicals (Serbia), 96–98
 Pekarev, 217
 Pelagić, Vasa, 63
 Peloponnese, 325, 327, 330–331, 335, 393
 Go to the People movement (1873/1874), 21
 People's Party (Greece) (1910), 338, 351
 Perović, Latinka, 56–57, 62, 64, 66, 103
 Peter the Great of Russia, 114
 Petmezas, T., 338

- Petsales, A., 335
 Philikē Etairia, 57
 Pireaus, 400
 Pisarev, Dimitri, 58
 Plastiras, Nikolaos, 361, 401
 Plekhanov, Georgi, 21–23, 170, 176, 185, 192, 234–235, 288–289, 330, 397
 Pleven, 193, 215–216, 247, 262, 299
 Plovdiv, 57–58, 177, 262
 Podrinski, 211
 POF, 21, *see* Parti ouvrier français
 Poland, 25–26, 303
 Popović, Stevan, 137
 Popović-Obradović, Olga, 145
 Popovo, 262
 Popular Party (Greece), 306, 338–339, 342, 360–364, 376, 383, 400, 401–402
 Popular Party of Bulgaria, 280
 populism, 2, 4, 7, 21, 24, 31, 64, 112, 148, 176, 274, 416
 Pouliopoulos, Pandelēs, 313, 349
 Požarevački, 211
 Prodanović, 64
 Progressive Party (Serbia), 48, 72–75, 100, 109, 129–130, 142, 281
 Progressive-Liberal Party (Bulgaria), 206, 280
 Prokopiev, 22, 187–189, 190
 Protić, M., 61
 Protopapadakēs, P., 337–338
 Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph, 46, 148, 175
 Purists (Greece), 349–350, 392
 Pürvanov, Georgi, 192
 Pushkin, Alexander, 58
Rabotnicheski Vestnik, 192, 224
Rabotnishko Delo, 210
Radenik, 60, 147
 Radomir, 384
 Radomir Republic (1918), 299
 Radoslavist Party, 280
 Rakovski, Georgi, 45
 Rakovski, Krüstiū, 23, 45, 50–51, 56–58, 166, 179
 Red Banner affair (1875), 90, 119
 Renan, Ernest, 220
 Repoulēs, E., 337, 338
 revisionism, 4, 158, 160, 164–165, 167, 170–171, 187, 218, 223, 265, 273–276, 283–284, 300, 354, 389, 416
 Rigopoulos, A., 335
 Ristić, Jovan, 74, 75, 100, 109
 Romania, 2, 12–13, 19–23, 27, 49–50, 149, 189, 233, 281, 283, 302–305, 319, 324, 339, 414
 Romanian Social Democratic Party (1910), 285, 395
 Romanian socialists, 21, 22, 50
 Romanian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (1893), 283, 395
 Ruse, 57
 Russia, 19–23, 25–26, 28, 31, 35, 45, 48, 52, 65, 67, 68–69, 74, 112–113, 116–118, 140, 148, 153, 171–172, 188, 234, 290, 294, 329, 381
 Russian Populism, 2, 8, 19, 22, 27, 59, 65–66, 69, 72, 77, 104, 176, 185, 237, 267, 290, 293
 Sadovo, 54
 Sakharov, 166
 Sakūzov, Janko, 52, 56, 58, 157, 159, 160, 164–165, 167, 168–169, 177, 178, 181, 183, 194, 206, 210, 221–233, 235–236, 240–249, 252, 257–258, 269, 271–273, 276–278, 282–283, 287–288, 299
Süvremeniy Pokazatel, 58, 175
 Schäffle, 44
 Second International, 3, 20, 23, 146–147, 158, 170, 214, 233–234, 289, 307, 329, 347, 373–374, 416
Selski Vestnik, 209
 Šemjakin, A., 134
 September Uprising (1923), 385
 Serbia, 1–2, 3, 7, 12–13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 44, 48, 51–53, 59, 61–64, 70–73, 99, 112, 135, 137, 141, 150, 216, 232, 281, 284–285, 302

- Serbian Artisan and Worker's Union, 146
- Serbian National Peasant Union (Srpska Narodna Seljačka Sloga), 304
- Serbian Radical Party, 24, 39, 52, 55, 60–62, 64, 74, 96, 98–99, 103–104, 108–111, 122, 125, 129, 132–133, 136, 138–140, 142, 154, 156, 233
- Serbian radicalism, 3, 5, 19, 22–23, 36, 51, 59, 62, 65, 218, 232
- radical program appears (1881), 100–103, 108
- Serbian radicals, 2, 5, 9, 26, 28, 38, 51, 55, 76, 83, 198–199, 204, 218–221, 232, 266, 274, 285, 289, 303, 317, 344, 410, 419
- Serbian Social Democratic Party (1903), 24, 210, 283
- Serbian Uprising (1804), 139
- Sevlievo, 58
- Shelgunov, 58
- Shemjakin, A. L., 55, 62
- Shumen, 57–58
- Siderēs, A., 343
- Siromashka Pravdina*, 175
- Skerlić, Jovan, 63, 87, 144–145, 216, 283
- Sklēros, Georgios, 20, 311–313, 324, 328–329, 330, 333, 336–337, 341, 343, 350, 394, 395, 397
- Skupština, 71–73, 96–98, 101, 119, 129, 134–135, 156
- Slavonia, 149
- Sliven, 57–58, 188, 211, 262
- Smederevo, 140, 156
- Smyrna, 361, 391
- Social Democratic Party (Bulgaria), 42, 205, 246, 257, 261
- Social Democratic Party (Greece) (1931), 377, 404
- Social Democratic Party (Partiia), 157, 168–169, 173, 177, 180–181, 184, 232, 248
- Social Democratic Party (Romania), 234
- Social Democratic Party (Serbia), 63
- Social Democratic Party (SPD) (Germany), 20, 208–209
- Social Democratic Union (Süiuz), 157, 166, 168–169, 173, 177, 179, 180–184, 232, 248, 265, 276, 278
- Socialist Center of Athens (1911), 396
- Socialist Workers' Party of Greece (SEKE) (1918), 307, 310, 343, 346, 370, 372–374, 377, 396
- Socijal-Demokrat*, 147
- Sociological Society, *see* Sociologists (Greece)
- Sociologists (Greece), 273, 337–340, 343, 355–356, 358
- Sofia, 58, 177–178, 262, 299, 384
- Soviet Union, 309
- Spain, 11, 27
- Spann, Othmar, 220
- St. Petersburg, 22, 147
- Stalinism, 368
- Stamboliiski, Aleksander, 20, 217–220, 275, 382, 385
- Stambolov, Stefan, 48, 52, 184, 240, 246, 279–282, 352, 397
- Stambolovchina, 58
- Stanojević, Dragiša, 63
- Staro Oslobodjenje, 90, 98
- Stere, Constantine, 21, 234, 284, 297, 300, 339
- Stoianov, Zakharii, 45
- Stoilov, K., 280
- Sübranie*, 178, 383
- Süiuz, *see* Social Democratic Union (Süiuz)
- Svobodi Misli*, 175
- Switzerland, 21, 38, 52, 117, 167, 378
- Taine, Hippolyte, 288
- Tajsić, Ranko, 96
- Taušanović, Kosta, 137
- Theotokēs, K., 338, 341–342
- Thessaloniki, 95, 337, 340, 348, 358, 360–361, 391, 405
- Thessaly, 325, 327, 348, 353, 357, 398–399

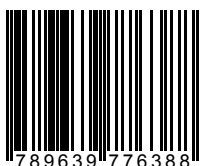
- Third International, *see* Comintern
 Timok Rebellion (Timočka Buna)
 (1883), 110, 113, 118, 120, 132–133, 138
 Tito–Stalin break (1948), 421
 Todorović, Pera, 23, 38, 39, 51, 90, 108–110, 120–121, 126, 138, 147
 Triandafyllidēs, G., 325
 Triandafyllidēs, M., 340
 Triandafyllopoulos, K., 338
 Trieste, 147, 322
 Trikoupis party (Greece), 335
 Trotsky, Leon, 139, 161
 Tsaldarēs, Panagēs, 401
 Tsankov, 385
 Tserkovski, Ts., 209, 217
 Turgenev, 58
 Tŭrnovo, 57–58, 208–209, 211, 217, 279
 Tŭrnovo Constitution, 205
 United Serbian Youth (Ujedinjena Omladina Srpska), 71
 Venizelism, 5, 341–342, 366–367, 376, 378, 384, 400, 402
 Venizelos, Eleftherios, 5, 131, 284, 301–302, 307, 321, 340–343, 348, 351–361, 363, 365, 370, 379, 380, 382–383, 394–396, 398–399, 400–402, 404, 411, 413, 419
 Veterans' Movement (Greece) (1924), 378, 404
 Vidin, 58
 Vienna, 118, 167
 Vojvodina, 149
 Volos, 339, 395–396
 Volos Workers' Center, 346
 Voroncov, 300
 Vozikēs, H., 337–338
 Vratsa, 211
 Vujić, Mihailo, 137
 Wallachia, 233
 Workers' and Peasants' Party (Greece), 356, 394
 Workers' Center of Thessaloniki, 400
 Workers' Solidarity Federation, 340, 342–343, 347–348, 358, 395–396, 400, 411
 Young Italy, 85
 Young Turks, 321, 353
 Yugoslavia, 50, 149, 285, 305–306, 309–310, 316, 333–334, 420
 Zabunov, 217
 Zasulich, 23
 Zubcu-Codreanu, P., 21
 Zudzilovskij-Russel, N. K., 21
 Žujović, Jovan M., 143
 Žujović, Živojin, 88
 Zurich, 23, 55, 147

This is an important and innovative comparative study of socialist movements and regimes of modernization in the Balkans, encompassing Serbian populism, Bulgarian social democracy and Greek communism. It makes an original contribution both to the history of political ideas and to the political sociology of radical and socialist movements. It provides a fascinating account of the transplantation of ideologies that were adopted from Western Europe and from Russia into the very different environment of the Balkans, and traces their adaptation and their reception in this new environment.

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